NINTENDO POWER

Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers • Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box • Dead Space: Extraction • The Beatles: Rock Band

245

SEPTEMBER 2009

SUBSCRIBER EDITION

Your subjects obey your every command.

© 2009 Marvelous Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved. Licensed to and published by XSEED Games. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

XSEED GAMES

www.xseedgames.com

Marvelous Entertainment USA, Inc.

T TEEN
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Crude Humor
Mild Cartoon Violence
Suggestive Themes
Use of Alcohol

It's good to be the King.

Order your brave knights to conquer nearby kingdoms, expanding your domain.

Dangerous beasts are no match for loyal peons.

Little King's Story

Each villager has their own life, skills, schedules and dreams. Sucks to be them.

A completely unique kingdom-building, region-conquering, dragon-slaying, princess-saving adventure.

Feel the Power.

Have your subjects build bridges or destroy obstacles. They'll do whatever you ask. After all, you're the King.

www.littlekingsstory.com

Wii™

CONTENTS

SEPTEMBER 2009

FEATURES

Crystal-Clear Difference 38
The Wii console gets an epic story-driven adventure with Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers.

We Love Game Boy 50
As the Game Boy turns 20, we look at the fun times and lasting impact the little system left behind.

Think Outside the Box 58
Our favorite new DS series of 2008 is back with Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box.

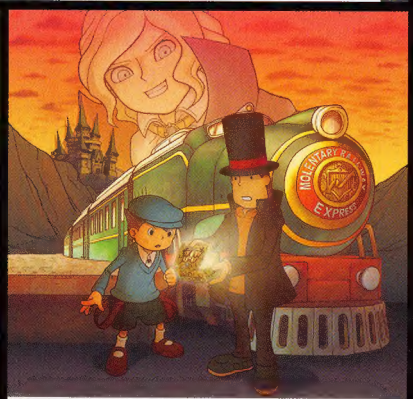
Monkey on Board 66
The Super Monkey Ball series takes an unexpected turn with the Wii-exclusive Step & Roll.

All Together Now 70
We step into the legendary shoes of John, Paul, George, and Ringo with The Beatles: Rock Band for Wii.

First Contact 74
Dead Space Extraction blasts onto Wii with intense sci-fi-horror action.

FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES: THE CRYSTAL BEARERS 38

WE LOVE GAME BOY 50



PROFESSOR LAYTON AND THE DIABOLICAL BOX 58

SUPER MONKEY BALL: STEP & ROLL 66

THE BEATLES: ROCK BAND 70

DEAD SPACE EXTRACTION 74

ACTIVE LIFE eXtreme challenge

Play inside

Go extreme

15 Extreme games! Cool new graphics. Awesome multiplayer modes. Fun for the whole family!

EVERYONE
E
Comic Mischief
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

AQUA POD

Active Life and Aquapod are teaming up to support a healthy lifestyle for you and your family. Visit **getactivegetextreme.com** to learn more!

BANDAI NAMCO Games

Wii

"Active Life" is a trademark of NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc.
© 2009 NAMCO BANDAI Games America Inc.
Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.
The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association

www.playactivelife.com

CONTENTS

SEPTEMBER 2009

DEPARTMENTS

Pulse 6

News 10

Download 16

Previews 22

A Boy and His Blob 23
Animal Kingdom: Wildlife Expedition 33
Astro Boy: The Video Game 25
Dance Dance Revolution 35
Deca Sports 2 28
Dragon Ball: Revenge of King Piccolo 34
Fossil Fighters 33
Harvest Moon DS: Sunshine Islands 30
Karaoke Revolution 27
Mini Ninjas 32
Muramasa: The Demon Blade 26
Naruto Shippuden: Ninja Destiny 2 29
Phantasy Star Ø 22
Spore Hero 36
Spore Hero Arena 36
Spyborgs 24
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes 35
Tornado Outbreak 27
WireWay 28

Power Profiles 80

Playback 84

Reviews 87

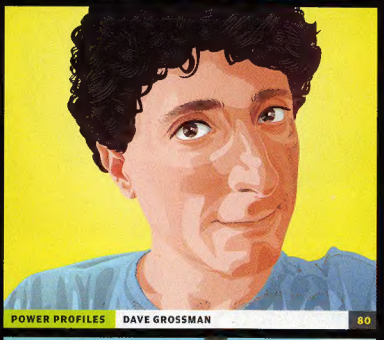
Ant Nation 90
G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra 90
Madden NFL 10 89
Space Bust-A-Move 90
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen (DS) 90
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen (Wii) 90
Wii Sports Resort 88

Community 94

Next Month 96

NEWS THE SKY CRAWLERS: INNOCENT ACES 10

PREVIEW PHANTASY STAR Ø 22



POWER PROFILES DAVE GROSSMAN 80

REVIEW Wii SPORTS RESORT 88

GAME INDEX

Animal Kingdom: Wildlife Expedition (Wii)	33
Ant Nation (DS)	90
Art Style: Boxlife (DW)	21
Astro Boy: The Video Game (Wii)	25
The Beatles: Rock Band (Wii)	70
A Boy and His Blob (Wii)	23
Calling (Wii)	12
Dance Dance Revolution (Wii)	35
Dead Space Extraction (Wii)	74
Deca Sports 2 (Wii)	28
Dragon Ball: Revenge of King Piccolo (Wii)	34
Drill Sergeant Mindstrong (WW)	19
Eduardo the Samurai Toaster (WW)	19
Family Mini Golf (WW)	19
Fantasy Zone II: The Tears of Opa-Opa (VC)	20
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers (Wii)	38
Final Fantasy Gaiden: Four Warriors of Light (DS)	11
Fish 'Em All (WW)	19
Fossil Fighters (DS)	33
G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra (DS)	90
Genghis Khan II: Clan of the Gray Wolf (VC)	21
Harvest Moon: My Little Shop (WW)	18
Harvest Moon DS: Sunshine Islands (DS)	30
Karaoke Revolution (Wii)	27
La-Mulana (WW)	16
Let's Catch (WW)	19
Madden NFL 10 (Wii)	89
Mario vs. Donkey Kong: Minis March Again! (DW)	21
Mini Ninjas (Wii)	32
Moki Moki (WW)	17
Muramasa: The Demon Blade (Wii)	26
Naruto Shippuden: Ninja Destiny 2 (DS)	29
NEVES Plus (WW)	19
Phantasy Star Ø (DS)	22
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky (DS)	14
Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box (DS)	58
Rainbow Islands: Towering Adventure! (WW)	19
Reel Fishing Challenge (WW)	20
Robocalypse: Beaver Defense (WW)	17
Rune Factory 3 (DS)	14
Silver Star Reversi (WW)	20
SimEarth: The Living Planet (VC)	21
The Sky Crawlers: Innocent Aces (Wii)	10
Sky Pirates of Neo Terra (Wii, DS)	14
Space Bust-A-Move (DS)	90
Space Harrier (VC)	20
Spore Hero (Wii)	36
Spore Hero Arena (DS)	36
Spyborgs (Wii)	24
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes (Wii)	35
Sudoku Master (DW)	21
Super Monkey Ball: Step & Roll (Wii)	66
Super Star Wars (SNES)	84
Swords & Soldiers (WW)	20
Tornado Outbreak (Wii)	27
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen (Wii, DS)	90
Water Warfare (WW)	20
Wii Sports Resort (Wii)	88
WireWay (DS)	28
Your Shape (Wii)	11

DS = NINTENDO DS
DW = DSiWare
SNES = SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
VC = VIRTUAL CONSOLE
Wii = Wii
WW = WiiWare

NEWS
DOWNLOAD
PREVIEW
FEATURE
PLAYBACK
REVIEW

You're Invited To A

BIRTHDAY PARTY Bash™

Up to 12 Can Play

Pin The Tail • Birthday Blowout • Sack Race • Hot Potato • Cake Stacker • Musical Chairs
Balloon Popper • Red Light, Green Light • Laser Gremlin • Copy Cat and more!

FREE Party Invitations

Birthday parties will never be the same...

Up to 12 partygoers can whack, roll, splash and shimmy their way through over 20 classic birthday party games. When it's cake time, everyone can sing along to Happy Birthday. Free party invitations included in the box!

EVERYONE 10+ E Comic Mischief
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

Wii™

CAT DADDY

2K play

© 2009 Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. and its subsidiaries. Birthday Party Bash, 2K Play, and the 2K logo are all trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. in the USA and /or foreign countries. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All rights reserved.

Pulse

Game Boy Lives On

Back in the day, I was never what you'd call a hardcore Game Boy fan. I owned one and played it to death, but I mostly regarded it as a substitute for my NES when I wasn't able to play the console. But while helping to prep our 20th Anniversary Game Boy feature (pg. 50), a surprising thing happened—I was finally, fully bit by the Game Boy bug. A part of it is nostalgia, but more than that, I've come to appreciate the beautiful simplicity of the handheld's best games. Developing a fun title for today's superpowerful systems isn't easy, but the only barriers are budget and imagination. To create a worthwhile experience within the technical limitations of the Game Boy was its own kind of art. Game Boy titles had to get by on pure gameplay and couldn't cover up rough spots with sweeping story cinemas or a wealth of extra content. So here's to you, Game Boy—thanks for all the great memories, plus the fun times I've yet to discover.

CHRIS SLATE EDITOR IN CHIEF

Chris Slate here, back once again to answer your letters while sunbathing on the deck of the Nintendo Power airship. But first, this month's special letter request: what do you think of Wii Sports Resort and the Wii MotionPlus accessory? (Assuming you've tried them, of course.) Send your responses to the address on page 8, and we'll print the best ones!

LETTERS

A TALE OF TWO POWERS

I'm curious about the differences between the Subscriber Edition of Nintendo Power and the version sold in stores. Comparing the Subscriber Edition of Volume 242 to a newsstand copy, I can see that "Subscriber Edition" is written on the spine; all of the text and promo overlays have been removed from the art; the bar code and Future US label have been replaced by the subscriber shipping label with a brief list of features to the left of it; the banner on the top of the cover about The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks has been removed; and the Nintendo Power logo was changed from red to orange. Are there any other differences between the two versions? And why do you guys have two different editions of the magazine anyway? I like the idea; I'm just wondering. **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

You pretty much nailed all of the differences. As to *why* we print two versions of each issue, the answer is simple: we want to reward loyal subscribers with a little something special. We trust that subscribers will read the magazine without gratuitous selling on the cover, so we clear away the clutter to create a more elegant, collectible presentation that lets the artwork really shine. Whenever possible we use special alternate art for the "subs" covers, often with variant fluorescent inks. When you put a bunch of subs covers in a row, they look pretty cool! (We think so, anyway.)

Here are both editions of this month's cover. Though we love the newsstand version, the Subscriber Edition offers a much better look at the amazing art.

Mario and Luigi: Superstar Saga is my favorite Game Boy Advance game, and Partners in Time is one of my favorites for DS, but the new Bowser's Inside Story may be even better. A guy made of blocks that speaks with a French accent, and a crazy green-skinned villain whose lines rip the grammar book in half? Now *that's* character design! —RYAN G.

A Super Mario Bros. 3 Wii remake would make my face look like this.

MISSING "MUSIC"

This question might be a little late, but why didn't you guys review Wii Music in Nintendo Power? The only reason I can think of is that the game would have gotten a very low score, which could have affected sales around the holiday season. —POJO

Good question, Pojo. The basic answer is that we didn't review Wii Music because it isn't really a game—it's more of a creative tool—and we didn't think it would be appropriate to score it on the same scale as traditional titles. This happens from time to time; we also didn't review the Brain Age titles or Personal Trainer: Walking. We may devise an alternate review system to more accurately gauge software like this in the future, but for now, we want to be fair by not comparing apples to oranges.

GIVE THIS MAN A TANOOKI SUIT

Super Mario Bros. 3 turns 20 next year, and to celebrate, I say it should be rereleased on Wii with updated 2.5-D graphics like New Super Mario Bros. with music redone to Wii standards. This would be a great way to celebrate such a huge anniversary. After all, SMB3 is arguably the best platformer in history, so Mario and Luigi deserve it! (That's right, Chris—I stood up for Luigi!)

—SMB3 FAN #2673

Despite your slavish support of the green moocher, I heartily support your idea. SMB3 is one of my all-time favorite games, and we haven't seen an update since 1993's Super Mario All-Stars for Super NES. (Which, by the way, I also wouldn't mind seeing on Virtual Console.)

THE HAPPIEST PLACE ON EARTH

I've always thought that a theme park entirely based on the best Nintendo games would be really cool. It could have a Super Mario Galaxy roller coaster, and for the carnival games you could win 1-Up mushrooms. Maybe there could even be a ride where you get to sit in an Arwing from Star Fox and travel through space. What do you think? —JOSIE

In all seriousness, if there is a world of characters and settings outside of Disney that could make for a great theme park, it would have to be the world of Nintendo.

ROMANCING THE TRIFORCE

I read a letter in Volume 244 that discussed how Peach loves Mario and Zelda loves Link, but I want to talk about how we never really *see* that Link loves Zelda in any of the games. What I and other Zelda fans would like to see (I know this because I read a lot of Internet stories about Zelda) is a sequel to Ocarina of Time where Zelda and Link show their true feelings. The game could be about defending Hyrule from rebellions and other mean people, but there would be minimovies where Zelda and Link would hold hands and maybe even kiss, and the movie at the end of the game would show them getting married. Zelda fans would throw a party if this happened—I know I would! —TAYLOR D.

Hm. Well, fans often debate things such as whether Zelda games should have deeper stories and more cut-scenes, if Link should talk, and if the games should more directly flow into one another. How do we feel about the mushy stuff? More? None? Let's see a show of hands!

HUH?

Want to know what would be cool? If you could play Super Mario Galaxy and when you press the eject button a Mario suit would come out, and it is the same with the other suits, and when you win the game it will turn into reality.

—(NO NAME GIVEN)

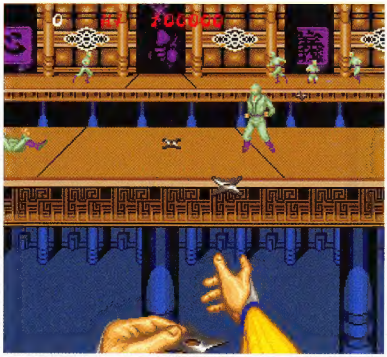
Winners don't use drugs.

DON'T HASSLE THE HOFF

Big the Cat is without a doubt the most memorable character ever to grace the gaming world. Anyone who says that he stinks has probably never played a video game, and is most likely too stupid to pick up a controller long enough to do so. Big is smarter than the entire staff at NP, plus he's stronger and cooler than Mr. T, Chuck Norris, and Klonoa *combined*! Big was going to be the final boss of the Mr. T game, but they had to take him out because he was so super-crazy powerful that no one could beat him (including Chuck Norris).

—OKAMI AMMATERASU

The Hoff says: The extra *M* in your name gives you away. While everyone knows that "Okami Amaterasu" is a Japanese wolf deity, it turns out that "Okami Ammaterasu" is just another way of saying "Big the Cat's mom." Which is weird, because I always heard that Big was the unholy union between a bag of rocks and some moldy pipe cleaners.



Think of how mind-shatteringly cool a ninja game could be with Wii MotionPlus-controlled weapons like a sword, sai, shuriken, bo staff, nunchaku, blowgun, and bow and arrow! **–MATT M.**

For some reason, your idea made me think of the bonus game from Shinobi [pictured to the left], only *a thousand times more awesome*.

HOW COULD THE Wii MOTIONPLUS ACCESSORY ENHANCE YOUR FAVORITE GAMES?

Wii MotionPlus would be great for Zelda. You could have 1:1 control over your sword, similar to Red Steel 2. Same for the bow, and you could get a better shot by staying as still as possible while drawing back. And the peripheral could change the face of puzzles forever. Imagine having to twist your Hookshot in midair to bend it around certain barriers, or attaching a key to an arrow, shooting it, and then twisting the arrow through the gaps in a series of closing walls to get the key in the door before Link gets crushed. And finally, you could use two remotes at once for elaborate magic rituals, or maybe a new instrument. **–HD**

It would be awesome to use Wii MotionPlus to slash the sword in Sin and Punishment 2. It could also come in handy in the Tales RPGs—not for combat, but to give characters like Mieu a whack when they get annoying.
–(NO NAME GIVEN)

Any hardcore giant-monster junkie like me probably saw the Wii MotionPlus and thought two words: Godzilla Unleashed. You could use the accessory for giant monster attacks like tail swings.
–GIANTMARIOMAN

Is it possible for Wario to shake it even more than he did in Wario Land: Shake It? The answer is *heck yeah*! The Wii MotionPlus could make it more fun to shake a Bandinero and more accurate to pitch a Pitchfork. The magnitude of the Quake Punch could be based on how hard you shake, which would also determine how long the move takes to recover.
–FISHERSPOT

Wii MotionPlus could be used to enhance both pitching and batting in an MLB game. Also, a Chinatown Wars remake for Wii would be great with Wii MotionPlus gun and sword aiming. Zelda would be (wait for it) *awesome* (like you guys) with Wii MotionPlus. Just imagine all of the things that publishers could do! **–CHRIS**

With the obvious sword fighting and tennis games already underway, I'd like to see an action game where you fight using a staff and similar weapons. Instead of having preset moves, the staff would simply copy how you move for real! **–ALT**

I think that the Wii MotionPlus would go great with a fun WarioWare game. I can't be the only one who thinks that some of the WarioWare: Smooth Moves minigames don't follow your movements well enough with just the remote. With the Wii MotionPlus add-on, you could lift weights, swing your hips, fly a plane, swing a sword, saw through a log, and complete other games without any glitches or false movements. **–KEVIN G.**

As soon as Wii MotionPlus was announced, everyone knew there had to be a new Star Wars game made for it. How cool would it be to see Darth Vader, Obi-Wan, Luke, and Yoda make the exact same movements as you? It would be the best thing ever! **–TOON LINK**

BRAWLER

Great ideas, everyone! After playing Wii Sports Resort the last couple of months, I'm more convinced than ever that Wii MotionPlus has a lot of amazing experiences in store for us. Up next is Red Steel 2 later this year, and that game is looking *good*.

PLEASE WRITE US

pulse@nintendopower.com

OR VIA CARRIER PIGEON AT

Nintendo Power/Pulse
c/o Future US
4000 Shoreline Court, Ste. 400
South San Francisco, CA 94080

TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR LETTER PUBLISHED:

Understand that the magazine staff is separate from Nintendo; we don't make the games.

Don't send links to game coverage on the Web—trust us; we see it all.

Don't ask about the status of upcoming games, or whether certain games will be announced; if we have that info, we'll always tell you.

NINTENDO POWER

CHOCOBROS

EDITOR IN CHIEF **Chris Slate**
EXECUTIVE EDITOR **Steve Thomason**
SENIOR EDITOR **Chris Hoffman**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR **Justin Cheng**
ART DIRECTOR **Chris Imlay**
CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER **Rebekah Lane**
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS **Andrew Hayward, Tom Holoien, Casey Loe, Chris Shepperd, George Sinfield, David F. Smith, Phil Theobald**
COPY EDITOR **Candace Cunningham**
LICENSING MANAGER **Frances Wall Jha**
EDITOR AT LARGE **Scott Pelland**

BUSINESS
PUBLISHER **Kelley Corten**
SENIOR DIRECTOR NATIONAL ADVERTISING **Rachelle Considine - rconsidine@futureus.com - 650.238.2505**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INTEGRATED SALES **Nate Hunt - nhunt@futureus.com - 415.269.5408**
REGIONAL SALES DIRECTOR **Isaac Ugay - iugay@futureus.com - 949.305.0767**
REGIONAL SALES MANAGER **Rachel Campos - rcampos@futureus.com - 650.745.9207**
ACCOUNT MANAGER **Arthur St. Germain - astgermain@futureus.com - 650.238.2571**
INTEGRATED SALES DIRECTOR **Joe Pomparelli - jpomparelli@futureus.com - 323.342.1888**
INTEGRATED SALES MANAGER **David Wells - dwells@futureus.com - 646.723.5493**
DETROIT CONSUMER MANAGER **Alan Dickinson - alandmedia@comcast.net - 248.792.2408**
ADVERTISING COORDINATOR **Heidi Hapin - hhapin@futureus.com**
MARKETING MANAGER **Andrea Recio-Ang - arecio-ang@futureus.com**

PRODUCTION
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR **Richie Lesovoy**
SENIOR PRODUCTION COORDINATOR **Larry Briseno**
PRINT ORDER COORDINATOR **Jennifer Lim**

CONSUMER MARKETING
DIRECTOR CONSUMER MARKETING **Rich McCarthy**
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR **Crystal Hudson**
NEWSSTAND DIRECTOR **Bill Sheevey**
CONSUMER MARKETING OPERATIONS DIRECTOR **Lisa Radler**
RENEWAL & BILLING MANAGER **Mike Hill**
BUSINESS MANAGER **Elliot Kiger**
SR. ONLINE CONSUMER MARKETING MANAGER **Jennifer Trinker**
CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER **Mike Frassica**

FUTURE US, Inc.
4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080
www.futureus.com

PRESIDENT **Jonathan Simpson-Bint**
VP/CFO **John Sutton**
VP/PUBLISHING DIRECTOR **Stacey Levy**
VP INTERNET DEVELOPMENT **Tyson Daugherty**
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR GAMES **Stephen Pierce**
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR MUSIC **Brad Tolinski**
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR TECHNOLOGY & LIVING **Jon Phillips**
GENERAL COUNSEL **Charlotte Falla**
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR **Nancy DuBois**

FUTURE PLC
30 Monmouth St., Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW, England
www.futureplc.com
Tel: +44 1225 442244
www.futureplc.com

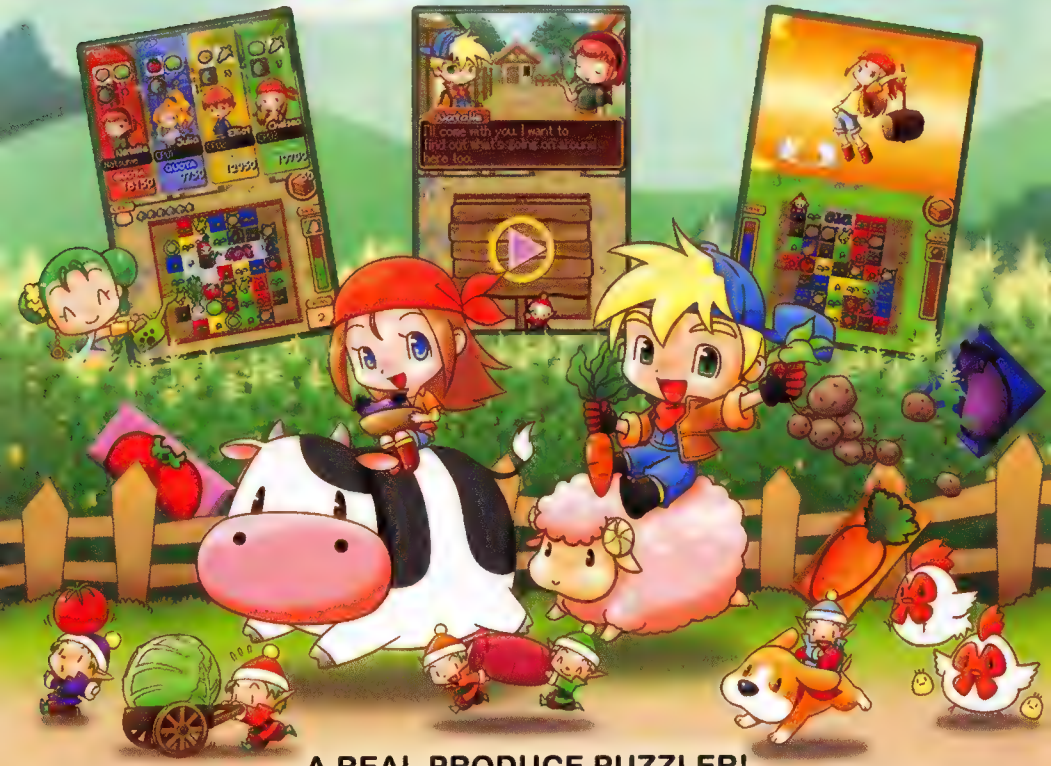
NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN: Roger Parry
CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Stevie Spring
GROUP FINANCE DIRECTOR: John Bowman

Nintendo Power Customer Care
P.O. Box 5770
Harlan, IA 51593-1270
1-866-941-8368
For Subscription Problems Only!
nintendopower@cdsfulfillment.com.
http://service.futureus-inc.com/
REPRINTS: For reprints, contact Reprint Management Services, 717.399.1900 ext. 100

Game trademarks and copyrights are property of their respective owners. TM, ®, the Nintendo DS logo and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2009 Nintendo.

ISSN: 1041-9551

HARVEST MOON
FRANTIC FARMING



A REAL PRODUCE PUZZLER!

Can you solve Sunny Island's crop crisis before the island is buried in an avalanche of vegetables? Choose from 12 characters, each with their own unique story and skill. Play a variety of modes including Story Mode, the brain-teasing Mission Mode, and Score Attack and Free Play Modes. Put your farming skills to the test against your friends and family in Multiplayer Mode!

EVERYONE
E
Visit www.esrb.org for more ratings information.
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

NINTENDO DS.

www.natsume.com

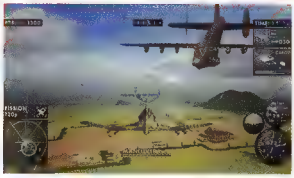
NATSUME®
Serious Fun®

©2009 Natsume Inc. Natsume, Serious Fun and Harvest Moon are registered trademarks of Natsume Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. All Rights Reserved. Characters Licensed from Marvelous Entertainment Inc. Developed by Platinum Egg. ©2006 Nintendo. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

GHOST STORY

BACK TO THE DUNGEON

IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT



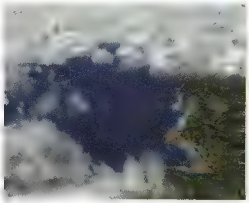
Coming up Aces

XSEED is localizing The Sky Crawlers: Innocent Aces, a Wii-exclusive aerial-combat game from the Ace Combat team.

You would think Namco Bandai would jump at the chance to localize an air-combat sim by one of the industry's top flight-game developers. But as with Retro Game Challenge and Fragile: Farewell Ruins of the Moon, the publisher took a pass on a US release, allowing XSEED to swoop in and save the day once again.

Despite the name, the action in Sky Crawlers is fast-paced and exciting—the peculiar title comes from the Japanese animated film *The Sky Crawlers*, which was recently released on DVD in the US. Fortunately, Sky Crawlers has also inherited several *good* things from the film, including theatrical-quality animated cut-scenes, the consulting talents of director Mamoru Oshii (of *Ghost in the Shell* fame), and the film's unique alternate-history setting, in which military pilots stage mock battles merely to sate public bloodlust in a world that has evolved beyond war.

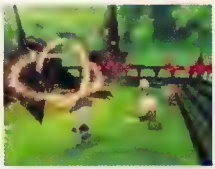
One of the game's most highly praised features is its novel use of the Wii console's motion controls (although players who prefer a more traditional Ace Combat-like experience are free to use a Classic or GameCube controller). In the new control scheme, players hold the Nunchuk controller in their right hand, directing the movement of their airplane with the Control Stick while tilting the whole Nunchuk to adjust pitch and yaw. The Wii Remote controller is held in the left hand, and is tilted up and down to control the airplane's speed. North American players will be able to give Sky Crawler's Wii-Remote throttle a yank when the game ships in late 2009. **—CASEY L.**



NEWS from JAPAN!

Good News Comes in Fours

Four Warriors of Light is a new four-player Final Fantasy spin-off from the writer of Final Fantasy IV.



When we spoke with Square Enix's Takashi Tokita after the release of Final Fantasy IV on the Nintendo DS handheld, he said that he and his development team would love to create "an entirely new title together." Now they have; Tokita, longtime producer Tomoya Asano, and the crack coders at Matrix have lifted the veil on Final Fantasy Gaiden: Four Warriors of Light—their first original collaboration after two well-received remakes. Introduced by Asano as "a classic fantasy-RPG created with modern technology," Four Warriors of Light is the latest in the popular trend of DS RPGs created to evoke nostalgia for the NES era. But it differs from games like 7th Dragon and Etrian Odyssey due to a pair of modern twists: full 3-D environments and four-player wireless co-op. This unique pairing of old and new is scheduled for a fall release in Japan, and if the team's track record is any indication, a North American version is sure to follow. **–CASEY L.**

The Art of the Game

Art books featuring Mega Man, Phoenix Wright, and more are headed to a bookstore near you.

The artists at Capcom have long been heralded as some of the best in the video game industry, and to prove it, UDON Entertainment will be publishing art collections of some of Capcom's top franchises later this year. Topping the list is Mega Man, which is getting not one but two art books—*Mega Man: Official Complete Works* (due in September) and *Mega Man X: Official Complete Works* (coming in November)—both packed with character designs, box art, promotional materials, and rare concept pieces from their respective series. (If that's not enough Mega Man for you, UDON is also planning to bring Mega Man manga to North America, focusing on the original Mega Man series and Mega Man Zero, though release dates haven't been determined.) Additionally, in September fighting fans can look forward to *SF20: The Art of Street Fighter*, which includes art from virtually every Street Fighter game ever, from the Super NES versions through Tatsunoko vs. Capcom for Wii. Ace Attorney fans won't be left out either, as *The Art of Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney* will land on store shelves in October. Despite the book's title, it will include 240 pages of artwork from all four games in the Ace Attorney series, including Apollo Justice. Each art book will retail for approximately $40. **–CHRIS H.**

Shape Shifter

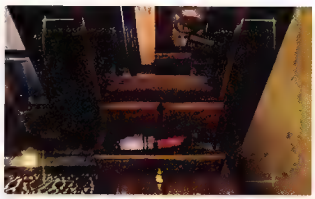
Fitness titles are all the rage these days, but Ubisoft's Your Shape stands out from the fat-burning crowd thanks to the inclusion of a camera. The device, which connects to one of the Wii console's USB ports, allows the game to scan your body and project the image onto the TV. A virtual coach will then provide feedback on all of your movements. (No more cheating on those lunges!) The game will also recommend a personalized workout program based on your specific body shape analysis, fitness level, and individual goals. Another benefit of the camera: your hands are free to incorporate any equipment (such as free weights) that you already own. **–STEVE T.**

Terror Comes a-Calling

A cursed website may be the death of those who answer Hudson Soft's Calling.

Horror fans who survive the October releases of Silent Hill: Shattered Memories and Ju-on: The Grudge will have another dose of fear waiting for them next spring, when Hudson unleashes Calling on Western shores. This original title revolves around a website called The Black Page, which has the power to transport chosen visitors to a space between life and death—a world of haunted houses, schools, and hospitals built from the memories of the dead.

You navigate this "in-between world" from a first-person perspective, using the Wii Remote as a flashlight as you search for clues and tools. The game has no combat but is filled with jump-out-at-you scares, some of which force players to swing the remote to escape. Calling seems to be heavily story-driven, with a large cast of playable characters and a central mystery that deepens as the game unfolds. Will you dare to visit The Black Page? **—CASEY L.**



GAME WATCH

forecast

Wii		
101-in-1 Party Megamix	Atlus	FALL 09
Academy of Champions	Ubisoft	9/09
Active Life: Extreme Challenge	Namco Bandai	SUM 09
All Star Cheer Squad 2	THQ	FALL 09
Animal Kingdom: Wildlife Expedition	Natsume	9/09
Arc Rise Fantasia	XSEED	WIN 09
Astro Boy: The Video Game	D3Publisher	10/09
Bakugan Battle Brawlers	Activision	10/09
Band Hero	Activision	11/09
The Beatles: Rock Band	MTV Games	9/09
Ben 10 Alien Force: Vilgax Attacks	D3Publisher	10/09
The Biggest Loser	THQ	FALL 09
A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	FALL 09
Build-A-Bear Workshop: Friendship Valley	The Game Factory	10/09
Cabela's Big Game Hunter	Activision	9/09
Cabela's Outdoor Adventures 2010	Activision	9/09
Calling	Hudson	SPR 10
Cars Race-O-Rama	THQ	FALL 09
Chaotic	Activision	11/09
Charm Girls Club: Pajama Party	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs	Ubisoft	9/09
Cursed Mountain	Deep Silver	Q3 09
Daisy Fuentes Pilates	Sega	SUM 09
Dance Dance Revolution	Konami	FALL 09
The Daring Game for Girls	Majesco	10/09
Dead Space Extraction	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Deca Sports 2	Hudson	FALL 09
Def Jam Rapstar	4mm	2009
DIRT 2	Codemasters	9/09
Disney Sing It: Pop Hits	Disney	FALL 09
DJ Hero	Activision	FALL 09
Dodge Racing: Charger vs. Challenger	Zoo	11/09
Dragon Ball: Revenge of King Piccolo	Namco Bandai	FALL 09
Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter	THQ	FALL 09
Dreamworks Madagascar Kartz	Activision	10/09
EA Sports Active—Expansion Pack 1	Electronic Arts	HOL 09
Endless Ocean 2	Nintendo	Q1 10
Family Fun Football	Tecmo	FALL 09
Family Party: 30 Great Games Outdoor Fun	D3Publisher	9/09
Fast Food Panic	SouthPeak	10/09
FIFA Soccer 10	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers	Square Enix	Q4 09
Flip's Twisted World	Majesco	WIN 09
Food Network: Cook or Be Cooked	Namco Bandai	FALL 09
Fragile: Farewell Ruins of the Moon	XSEED	WIN 09
Geon Cube*	UFO	10/09
Gladiator A.D.	TBA	TBA
Grease	505	TBA
The Grinder	TBA	TBA
Guitar Hero 5	Activision	9/09
The Hardy Boys: The Hidden Theft	Dreamcatcher	2009
Harvest Moon: Animal Parade	Natsume	9/09
Hasbro Family Game Night 2	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Hot Wheels: Battle Force 5	Activision	11/09
iCarly	Activision	10/09
Jakers! Let's Explore	Graffiti	Q3 09
Jambo! Safari Animal Rescue	Sega	WIN 09
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	Ubisoft	HOL 09
Jillian Michaels' Fitness Ultimatum 2010	Majesco	FALL 09
Ju-on: The Grudge	XSEED	10/09
Just Play for Fun*	UFO	9/09
Karaoke Revolution	Konami	FALL 09
The Legend of Zelda*	Nintendo	TBA
LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	LucasArts	FALL 09
LEGO Rock Band	Warner Bros.	WIN 09
Line Attack Heroes	Nintendo	TBA
Littlest Pet Shop Friends	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn's Quest	Warner Bros.	FALL 09
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games	Sega	10/09
Marvel Super Hero Squad	THQ	FALL 09
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	Activision	FALL 09
Metroid: Other M	Nintendo	2010
Mini Ninjas	Eidos	FALL 09
Monado: Beginning of the World	Nintendo	TBA
Mr. T	TBA	TBA
Muramasa: The Demon Blade	Ignition	9/09
My Baby 2	SouthPeak	11/09
MySims Agents	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Naruto Shippuden: Clash of Ninja Revolution 3	Tomy	Q3 09
Need for Speed Nitro	Electronic Arts	11/09
New Super Mario Bros. Wii	Nintendo	HOL 09
No More Heroes: Desperate Struggle	Ubisoft	Q1 10
Our House: Party!	Majesco	10/09
Partii Time*	Konami	FALL 09
Pizza Boy	Majesco	2009
Planet 51	Sega	WIN 09
Pop'n Music	Konami	FALL 09
The Princess and the Frog	Disney	FALL 09
Pyroblazer	TBA	TBA
Rabbids Go Home	Ubisoft	10/09
Red Steel 2	Ubisoft	WIN 09
Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles	Capcom	WIN 09
Resident Evil Archives: Resident Evil Zero	Capcom	WIN 09
Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus	2K Play	FALL 09
Rock Blast	UFO	9/09
Runaway The Dream of the Turtle	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
Sakura Wars: So Long, My Love	NIS America	11/09
Sam & Max Season Two	Atari	2009
Scooby-Doo: First Frights!	Warner Bros.	FALL 09
The Secret Saturdays: Beasts of the 5th Sun	D3Publisher	10/09
Shaun White Snowboarding: World Stage	Ubisoft	11/09
Shiren the Wanderer	Atlus	FALL 09
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	Konami	FALL 09
SimAnimals Africa	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Sin and Punishment 2	Nintendo	Q1 10
The Sky Crawlers: Innocent Aces	XSEED	HOL 09
Sky Pirates of Neo Terra	Aspyr	FALL 09
Sled Shred	SouthPeak	11/09
Smart Kid's Journey to Adventure	UFO	11/09
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	Sega	Q1 10
Span Smasher	Nintendo	TBA
Spectrobes: Origins	Disney	FALL 09
SpongeBob's Truth or Square	THQ	FALL 09
Spore Hero	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Spyborgs	Capcom	2009
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes	LucasArts	9/09
The Strike	Psyclone/XS Games	9/09
Super Mario Galaxy 2	Nintendo	2010
Sushi Go Round	SouthPeak	Q4 09
Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars	Capcom	WIN 09
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Smash Up	Ubisoft	9/09
Tony Hawk: Ride	Activision	2009
Toy Story Mania!	Disney	FALL 09
Ultimate Party Challenge	Konami	FALL 09
Valhalla Knights: Eldar Saga	XSEED	9/09
Wacky World of Sports	Sega	FALL 09
We Cheer 2	Namco Bandai	FALL 09
Wii Fit Plus	Nintendo	FALL 09
World of Zoo	THQ	FALL 09
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010	THQ	FALL 09
Your Shape	Ubisoft	WIN 09
Zephyr: Rise of the Elementals	Konami	FALL 09
NINTENDO DS		
Academy of Champions	Ubisoft	9/09
Ace Attorney Investigations: Miles Edgeworth	Capcom	1/10

Again. Eye of Providence	Tecmo	SPR 09
Agatha Christie: The ABC Murders	Dreamcatcher	2009
All Star Cheer Squad 2	THQ	FALL 09
Astro Boy: The Video Game	D3Publisher	10/09
Bakugan Battle Brawlers	Activision	10/09
Balloon Pop DS	UFO	11/09
Barbie 3-Musketeers	Activision	10/09
Battles of Giants: Dragons	Ubisoft	FALL 09
Ben 10 Alien Force: Vilgax Attacks	D3Publisher	10/09
The Biggest Loser	THQ	FALL 09
Bleach: The 3rd Phantom	Sega	FALL 09
Blood Bowl	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
Build-A-Bear Workshop: Welcome to Hugsville	The Game Factory	9/09
Cake Mania 3	Majesco	FALL 09
Cars Race-O-Rama	THQ	FALL 09
Chaotic	Activision	FALL 09
Charm Girls Club: My Fashion Mall	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Charm Girls Club: My Fashion Show	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Charm Girls Club: My Perfect Prom	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Cheer We Go	Natsume	9/09
Chocolatier	Zoo	11/09
A Christmas Carol	Disney	FALL 09
The Clique: Diss and Make up	Warner Bros.	FALL 09
Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs	Ubisoft	9/09
Cooking Mama 3	Majesco	HOL 09
C.O.P. The Recruit	Ubisoft	HOL 09
Crime Scene	SouthPeak	12/09
The Daring Game for Girls	Majesco	10/09
Dawn of Heroes	Majesco	Q3 09
de Blob	THQ	2009
Dementium II	SouthPeak	2/10
Diner Dash: Flo on the Go	Zoo	11/09
DIRT 2	Codemasters	9/09
Disciples II	Strategy First	TBA
DJ Star	Deep Silver	Q3 09
Dodge Racing: Charger vs. Challenger	Zoo	10/09
Doodle Hex	TBA	TBA
Dragon Ball Z: Attack of the Saiyans	Namco Bandai	FALL 09
Dragon Quest VI: Realms of Reverie	Square Enix	TBA
Drama Queens	Majesco	SPR 09
Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter	THQ	FALL 09
Dream Chronicles	Zoo	11/09
Dreamworks Madagascar Kartz	Activision	10/09
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Chain Reaction	Deep Silver	2009
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Critical Mass	Deep Silver	10/09
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Proving Grounds	Deep Silver	2009
Fast Food Panic	SouthPeak	10/09
FIFA Soccer 10	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Fighting Fantasy The Warlock of Firetop Mountain	Aspyr	HOL 09
Fossil Fighters	Nintendo	8/09
Glory of Heracles	Nintendo	2010
Golden Sun DS	Nintendo	2010
Grease	505	TBA
The Hardy Boys: Treasure on the Tracks	Sega	9/09
Harvest Moon. Sunshine Islands	Natsume	SUM 09
Hasbro Family Game Night 2	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Hot 'n' Cold	Majesco	2009
Hot Wheels: Battle Force 5	Activision	11/09
House M.D.	Legacy	HOL 09
iCarly	Activision	10/09
Imagine Artist	Ubisoft	FALL 09
Imagine Detective	Ubisoft	FALL 09
Imagine Salon Stylist	Ubisoft	FALL 09
Imagine Zookeeper	Ubisoft	FALL 09
Infinite Space	Sega	2009
Jambot Safari	Sega	Q4 09
James Patterson Women's Murder Club: Games of Passion	THQ	FALL 09
Jillian Michaels' Pocket Trainer 2010	Majesco	FALL 09
Jonas	Disney	Q3 09
Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days	Square Enix	FALL 09
Last King of Africa	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks	Nintendo	HOL 09
LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	LucasArts	FALL 09
LEGO Rock Band	Warner Bros.	WIN 09
Littlest Pet Shop: Beach Friends	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Littlest Pet Shop: City Friends	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Littlest Pet Shop: Country Friends	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn's Quest	Warner Bros.	FALL 09
Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story	Nintendo	FALL 09
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games	Sega	10/09
Marvel Super Hero Squad	THQ	FALL 09
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	Activision	FALL 09
Might & Magic: Clash of Heroes	Ubisoft	8/09
Mini Ninjas	Eidos	FALL 09
Moomin: The Mysterious Howling	Graffiti	Q3 09
Moto Racer	SouthPeak	9/09
MX vs. ATV Reflex	THQ	Q4 09
My Baby 2	SouthPeak	11/09
MySims Agents	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Naruto Shippuden: Ninja Destiny 2	Tomy	9/09
Need for Speed Nitro	Electronic Arts	11/09
Nostalgia	Ignition	9/09
Our House	Majesco	10/09
Petz Dogz Talent Show	Ubisoft	HOL 09
Petz Hamsterz Superstarz	Ubisoft	HOL 09
Petz Nursery	Ubisoft	HOL 09
Phantasy Star Ø	Sega	FALL 09
Picross 3D	Nintendo	TBA
Pirate Battle	Orbital Media	TBA
Planet 51	Sega	WIN 09
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky	Nintendo	FALL 09
Prank Your Neighbor	Dreamcatcher	TBA
Press Your Luck 2010	Ubisoft	9/09
The Princess and the Frog	Disney	FALL 09
Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box	Nintendo	8/09
Puzzle Chronicles	Konami	WIN 09
Ragnarok Online DS	XSEED	WIN 09
Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus	2K Play	FALL 09
Runaway: The Dream of the Turtle	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
Samantha Swift and the Hidden Roses of Athena	Mumbojumbo	10/09
Sands of Destruction	Sega	Q1 10
Scooby-Doo: First Frights!	Warner Bros.	FALL 09
Scribblenauts	Warner Bros.	FALL 09
Secret Flirts	SouthPeak	12/09
The Secret Saturdays: Beasts of the 5th Sun	D3Publisher	10/09
SimAnmals Africa	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Sky Pirates of Neo Terra	Aspyr	FALL 09
Smart Boy's Gameroom 2	UFO	9/09
Smart Girl's Playhouse 2	UFO	9/09
Smart Kid's Mega Game Mix	UFO	9/09
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	Sega	Q1 10
Space Invaders Extreme 2	Square Enix	9/09
SpongeBob's Truth or Square	THQ	FALL 09
Spore Hero Arena	Electronic Arts	FALL 09
Squishy Tank	Natsume	9/09
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	LucasArts	FALL 09
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes	LucasArts	9/09
Style Lab: Jewelry Design	Ubisoft	FALL 09
Style Lab: Makeover	Ubisoft	FALL 09
Style Savvy	Nintendo	HOL 09
Tinker Bell and the Lost Treasure	Disney	FALL 09
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	Q4 09
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	Q4 09
WarioWare D.I.Y.	Nintendo	TBA
Warlords DS	Strategy First	TBA
Wedding Dash	Zoo	11/09
WireWay	Konami	FALL 09
A Witch's Tale	NIS America	FALL 09
Wizards of Waverly Place	Disney	8/09
World of Zoo	THQ	FALL 09
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010	THQ	FALL 09
Zenses: Zen Garden	The Game Factory	9/09

RED TEXT = TITLES ADDED THIS MONTH. *TENTATIVE TITLE NOTE: RELEASE DATES OFTEN CHANGE.

Be a Pokémon and Save the World!

Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky soars beyond its predecessors with new features and surprises.

The Pokémon Mystery Dungeon series returns to the Nintendo DS this fall with Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky. In the spirit of Pokémon Platinum, this expanded version includes much that is familiar from Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Time and its companion title, Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Darkness, but by offering new "Special Episodes," greater communication options, a deeper narrative, and an expanded set of Pokémon for you to become or meet, it stands as the definitive version. Additionally, trading with or rescuing friends, or sending pals a demo version of the game, is a snap via wireless connectivity.

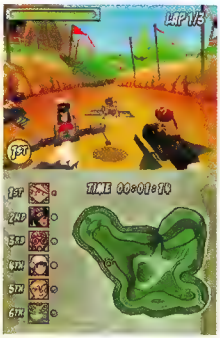
For those who have yet to discover this separate Pokémon series, here are the basics: You wake up to discover you've become a Pokémon, and you and your partner join Wigglytuff's Guild of explorer teams, take on missions to explore randomly generated dungeons, battle rogue Pokémon, and visit shops and services run by a variety of Pokémon including Kangaskhan, Kecleon, and Duskull. It's a world with charms and challenges all its own. **–SCOTT P.**

ILLUSTRATION BY KEN SUGIMORI

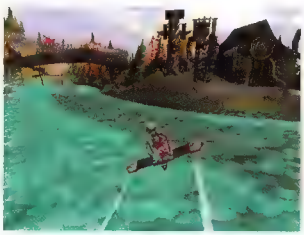
Air to the Throne

Upstart comic-book series **Sky Pirates of Neo Terra** brings aerial racing to Wii and DS.

Based on an upcoming comic book published by Image, Sky Pirates of Neo Terra is set in a post-apocalyptic world where humanity has splintered into 13 tribes. Power goes to the tribe that wins the all-important glidewing racing event, and, unfortunately, the winner is likely to be the evil Pirate King—unless you can stop him. As a young racer named Billy Boom Boom, it's up to you to compete in Mario Kart-style aerial races (complete with speed boosts and power-ups) and prevent the Pirate King from conquering Neo Terra. Published by Aspyr, the game—which is coming to Wii and DS in early 2010—features 15 courses, a lengthy single-player Story mode, Wi-Fi multiplayer options, and (on Wii) Balance Board support. **–CHRIS H.**



There's nothing pirates love more than kart-style aerial racing.



Curse of the Weresheep

NEWS from JAPAN!

Japanese publisher Marvelous Entertainment has announced a third DS installment of the Rune Factory series. This chapter features a new hero, a new world, and the new ability to transform into a cuddly sheep-creature and other so-called "monsters." When in monster form, you'll have new abilities in combat and receive different treatment from villagers. No word yet on a US release, but we'll be sure to keep you updated. **–CASEY L.**

GAMEFLY.COM

Video Game Rentals Delivered to Your Door

Over 6,000 Titles • No Late Fees • Free Shipping

Start now for only $8.95

Go to gamefly.com

PLAYSTATION 3 Wii XBOX 360

PlayStation 2 PSP XBOX NINTENDO GAMECUBE NINTENDO DS GAME BOY ADVANCE

© 2009 GameFly, Inc. GAMEFLY and the GF Logo are trademarks of GameFly, Inc. All other marks used under license by their respective owners. Unless you cancel your account, your credit card will be charged for the price of your game plan at the end of your free trial. You must be 18 years of age or older and reside inside the 50 United States to use the GameFly service.

DOWNLOAD

IN THIS SECTION

WIIWARE PREVIEW
La-Mulana

WIIWARE PREVIEW
Robocalypse: Beaver Defense

WIIWARE PREVIEW
Moki Moki

WIIWARE PREVIEW
Harvest Moon: My Little Shop

CREATIONS
Check Mii Out Channel

RESULTS
Most-Wanted Virtual Console Action Games

11
VIRTUAL CONSOLE REVIEWS
SPORTS
SHARPE ACTION
ISLAND ADVENTURE

4
VIRTUAL CONSOLE REVIEWS
FANTASY ZONE II: THE TEARS OF OPA-OPA
GENGHIS KHAN II: CLAN OF THE GRAY WOLF
SEARTH: THE LIVING PLANET
SPACE HARRIER

3
WiiWare REVIEWS
STYLE: BOXLIFE
MARIO VS. DONKEY KONG: MINIS MARCH AGAIN!
SUDOKU MASTER

Raider of the Lost Land

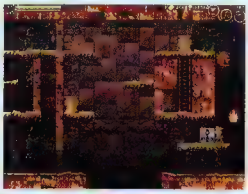
Ancient civilizations! Deadly traps! The classically inspired PC action-adventure **La-Mulana** comes to WiiWare to put your exploration skills to the test.

If Indiana Jones burst into a Metroid-style nonlinear adventure, you'd end up with something like La-Mulana. Already a cult hit on PC thanks to its spirited nature, challenging gameplay, and old-school 2-D action, the game is set to thrill gamers once again—this time on WiiWare—courtesy of developer Nigoro and publisher Nicalis.

The game puts you in the boots of whip-wielding Japanese archeologist Lemeza Kozuki, who's been summoned to the ancient ruins of La-Mulana by his father (who's also an explorer). Once you arrive, you encounter traps and puzzles at every turn, and discover that the mazelike ruins are chock-full of vicious enemies and nasty bosses. However, there are also plenty of items to help you overcome these challenges: equipment that lets you get to new areas, a variety of weapons (including an axe, a sword, a spear, and bombs) to help you battle foes, jewels that expand your health meter, and much more.

If you're at all familiar with the PC version of La-Mulana, all it takes is a quick glimpse at the screenshots to see that the game is being substantially improved for its arrival on WiiWare. The original game was heavily influenced by games for the Japanese 8-bit MSX computer system, right down to the graphical style; the WiiWare version is getting a complete visual overhaul that updates the presentation with a more detailed 16-bit look.

"The thing we aimed to do with the new La-Mulana is to make it like an improved version of the game," comments co-creator Takumi Naramura. "It's still 2-D, but it has evolved. These types of games can still be great and appealing."

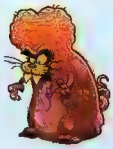


Other changes include tweaks to the difficulty (it will still be very challenging, but more hints will be offered for the puzzles) and the elimination of MSX references so the game will be friendlier to Western audiences. Naramura promises there will still be plenty of retro appeal, however. "The whole feel of the game will still remain nostalgic," he assures, "probably like what you can remember from playing old NES or Amiga games.... It'll still be a lot of fun."

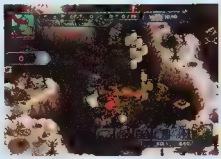
La-Mulana is still a ways off (development likely won't be done until the end of the year), but for hardcore action fans, it will surely be worth the wait. —**CHRIS H.**

As the crumpled skeletons indicate, it's much easier to enter the ruins of La-Mulana than it is to leave...alive, anyway.

Evil Beaver



Protect the world from a robot-controlling mutated beaver in WiiWare title **Robocalypse: Beaver Defense.**



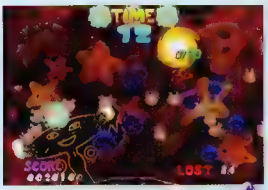
As anyone who's played PC adventure Day of the Tentacle knows, pollution turns normally harmless creatures evil. Such is the case in Robocalypse: Beaver Defense. The Thermodoom company, manufacturer of the military robots, has dumped its toxic waste into a river. A beaver that set up a dam there is mutated as a result, getting an enormous brain and a pitiful tail. Seeking revenge for the latter is what drives him to reprogram Thermodoom's robots to destroy humankind.

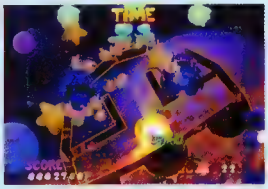
So it's up to you to put an end to this beaver's evil scheme—but unlike the original Robocalypse for the Nintendo DS, which was a full-fledged real-time strategy game, Beaver Defense takes a simpler tack: tower defense. You place autoattacking turrets across the map to protect your base from waves of enemies. The more baddies you defeat, the more resources you have to either build more turrets or upgrade your existing ones, giving the weapons more firepower or longer range. The towers range from the cheap-but-effective machine gun to the expensive-but-powerful missile launcher to the EMP, which turns foes into appliances such as toasters and refrigerators.

Fortunately, you're not fighting alone; in addition to some random shooting and repairing robots, there are hero robots that are essentially moveable turrets. Each of the six heroes has specific strengths and weaknesses—the sniper, for example, excels at long-range attacks but has a low amount of health—so it behooves you to choose one that suits your play style. Of course, you can always try them out in Survival mode before diving into Story mode. **—JUSTIN C.**

Moki Overboard!

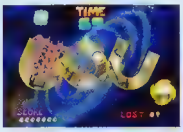
Save cute, cuddly critters from imminent demise in Natsume's puzzle game **Moki Moki** for WiiWare.





Question: What are cute, pink, helpless, and about to suffer a tragic death? Answer: the Mokis—and if they do meet their doom, it'll be all your fault. The premise behind Natsume's Moki Moki is pretty simple: a portal opens in space, out pour the big-eared Mokis, and it's up to you to guide them to an exit portal and save as many of the friendly creatures as possible. The trick is that you can't control the Mokis directly; you control the environment using the Control Pad or the 1 and 2 Buttons on the Wii Remote controller. This may mean tilting a level so the Mokis slide to safety, or it may mean moving a spaceship side to side so you can deflect falling Mokis off its roof and into the exit. But those are some of the most basic examples; each level has a different puzzle aspect and different parts to control. The environments grow increasingly complex, and you'll eventually get to rotate large machines, control a giant claw, turn massive gears, activate engine blasts that propel the Mokis through the air, and more. The levels also have moving parts that you can't control, as well as nasty enemies called Groblins that just can't get enough of that delicious Moki flavor. With 100 levels, Moki Moki promises to deliver plenty of uniquely challenging gameplay when it arrives on WiiWare this summer. **—CHRIS H.**

Each level has different gimmicks for you to control.



Farm Fresh

Natsume delivers a new chapter in its beloved farming-sim series with Harvest Moon: My Little Shop for WiiWare.

The Harvest Moon series has always given players a lot to do. There are crops to grow, animals to raise, villagers to interact with, Harvest Sprites to save, and a lot more. Harvest Moon: My Little Shop scales down the franchise for WiiWare, but it contains almost all of the elements that made its predecessors so popular, albeit with a different take on the Harvest Moon formula.

My Little Shop places you in the role of a young lad or lass who's left the city to live the rustic country life with his or her grandparents. The town you move to, however, has seen better days, and your grandparents are in danger of closing up their shop due to lack of business. That's where you come in—running not one but three types of shops as you help get your grandparents and the whole town back on their feet.

Most of the gameplay revolves around satisfying customers at a juice stand, an ice cream shop, and an egg-decorating store. Each business is controlled by different Cooking Mama-style minigames. At the juice stand you collect fruits and vegetables by knocking them off conveyor belts, then pump the Wii Remote controller up and down to create juice of the proper consistency; at the ice cream shop you play a rhythm game to convince your cow to produce milk, then you hold the remote upright and make a swirling motion to fill a cone with ice cream; at the egg-decorating store you play a shell-style identification game to determine which chicken will lay an egg, then you draw on the egg with colored pens and apply stamps as per customer specifications. As you complete orders successfully, you'll earn money that you can use to buy new equipment that adds new minigames and provides increased profits. The juice stand's slicer, for example, lets you swing the remote to chop fruits and vegetables as they fall from the sky.

Of course, there's more to the title than just playing minigames. You'll use your profits to buy new types of crops and livestock, expend your farm, and decorate your business. You'll also use a menu-driven interface to care for your animals and tend to your crops so you can continue to sell the best products at your store. Additionally, the villagers have affection meters that rise as you meet their needs—essential for advancing the story. To top it off, an assortment of downloadable content will be on offer, adding new ingredients and new NPCs, including recognizable characters from past Harvest Moon games. Natsume hopes to have the game ready late this summer. **–CHRIS H.**

Each store offers different minigames that grow in complexity as you buy new equipment.

CHECK 'EM OUT

If you haven't visited the Check Mii Out Channel recently, you've been missing out on a lot of incredibly creative Mii characters. Here are some of the top Mii submissions as voted by you, the fans.

A famous TV celebrity
BY NICK

A bespectacled beauty
BY DJ GIRL

A child who is ill from eating too many sweets
BY CANADA

Ulysses S. Grant
BY THEIFY

evaluation station

Wiiware | Virtual Console | DSiware

DRILL SERGEANT MINDSTRONG

PUBLISHER: [illegible]

Dr[illegible] has a pretty cute premise. It's a minigame collection set within a cartoony boot camp, complete with an R. Lee Ermey-esque instructor. The minigames are all pretty enjoyable, and the multiplayer mode can be a hoot. Unfortunately, there are only four minigames to choose from, meaning it's no matter how much fun the games are [illegible] ra[illegible]

EDUARDO THE SAMURAI TOASTER

PUBLISHER: [illegible]

I[illegible] mental art style – the ever-changing background aesthetic ranges from acrylic paint to sketch work reminiscent of a-ha's famous "Take On Me" video. Is less interesting is the s[illegible] low, repetitive gameplay. A four-player co-op mode helps, but even with friends, blasting the same few foes level after level grows old quickly. Also, the game's bizarre theme is some[illegible] un[illegible]

FAMILY MINI GOLF

PUBLISHER: [illegible]

Family Mini Golf has extremely accessible controls and some fairly creative, gimmick-filled courses, but it doesn't have a lot of depth or technique. The swing mechanics could hardly be more basic – it's the A Button to set your power, then swing the Wii Remote in any direction and the camera sometimes gets stuck at weird angles. Nonetheless, the low price makes this a decent investment, and there are additional courses available for [illegible]

FISH 'EM ALL

PUBLISHER: [illegible]

[illegible] isn't a true fishing game. Instead, you simply wave around and swing a net to capture fish that jump out of the water. It feels a bit like an updated Game & Watch title. Despite a clever Puyo Pop-inspired Fishtris mode and decent multiplayer, the repetitive nature of the gameplay and the unresponsive motion controls make the [illegible] ab[illegible]

Grumble Grumble

LET'S CATCH

PU[illegible]

Be[illegible] certainly off to a peculiar start. Let's Catch is precisely what it sounds like – a simulation of playing catch. You throw by flicking the Wii Remote, and catch by pressing the A and B Buttons at just the right moment. As with the real thing, it's a pretty relaxing way to pass the time. Who knew it could be so meaningful, though? In Story mode, you'll befriend complete strangers, and the longer you play with them, the more you'll open up about their lives. In the process, you'll help their work through some deep-seated emotional issues. The whole enterprise feels like a strange glimpse into Nat's psyche. Ne[illegible]

NEVES PLUS

PUBLISHER: [illegible]

Simple [illegible] NEVES Plus is hardly the most exciting game out there, but it certainly has its appeal if you're in the market for a brain-teaser. The presentation is far superior to the DS version of NEVES (released in 2007), and the game offers a plethora of modes, many of which are designed specifically for multiplayer. The game also includes hundreds of puzzles of varying difficulty, giving you a ton of value for a meager [illegible]

Recommended

RAINBOW ISLANDS: TOWERING ADVENTURE!

PUBLISHER: [illegible]

[illegible] remake recently hitting WiiWare, it's no surprise to see an updated version of its sequel follow suit. The game's main gimmick – creating rainbows to use as both platforms and offensive weapons – is [illegible] but the new mechanic of constantly climbing a tower under a strict time limit becomes tiresome. The lack of stage variety doesn't he[illegible]

EVALUATION STATION

REEL FISHING CHALLENGE

PUBLISHER: [illegible]
GENRE: [illegible]

[illegible] ally be pretty relaxe[illegible] replicating the old-tod[illegible] reeling a natural[illegible] Wii Remote. Reel Fishing Challenge is a new entry in Natsume's long-running series, but unfortunately a lack of options makes the angling simulation feel only a Challenge under a stormy fishing under a storm[illegible] lines and reeling[illegible] the time—and that's The whole thing feels demo for the real t[illegible] re[illegible]

Grumble Grumble

SWORDS & SOLDIERS

[illegible]

Justin C's Pick

[illegible] complex side, but Swords & Soldiers is an admirable bit of erasing you into the genre. This is largely due to the fact that it's side-scrolling and that your troops and attacks automatically. You create and upgrade your units and skills without worrying about stuff like soldier micromanagement. Additionally, the three different factions—Vikings, Aztecs, and Chinese—look and feel unique, and their anachronistically contemporary dialogue is pretty funny. All of this helps [illegible]

[illegible]

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

FANTASY ZONE II: THE TEARS OF OPA-OPA

PLATFORM: MASTER SYSTEM PUBLISHER: SEGA
GENRE: SHOOTER ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1987

If nothing else, Fantasy Zone II earns some points for having one of the most unnecessarily melancholy subtitles in video game history. Despite its sullen title, though, Fantasy Zone is just as bright and cheerful as ever. Added to this sequel are warp gates that send your little ship to different areas in search of enemies to destroy. It makes the levels more complex, sure, but it also makes them somewhat irritating to navigate. It's still a fun game (and a decent challenge), but it doesn't quite live up to its predecessor. –PHIL T.

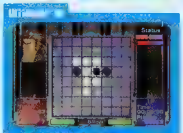
WATER WARFARE

[illegible]

Phil T's Pick

[illegible] shooter with your little brother or sister (or your neighbor) but have hesitated because of the violence? Well, in Water Warfare, all of the traditional weapons have been replaced with good-ol' squirt guns. Instead of health packs, towels can be found, and the arenas include places like a playground and a beach. The simple single-player mode prepares you for the game's surprisingly robust multiplayer mode, which features plenty of match types, local co-op, split-screen, and eight-person online [illegible]

[illegible]



SILVER STAR REVERSI

PUBLISHER: ACCESS
GENRE: [illegible]

[illegible] Silver Star Reversi is a no-frills interpretation of a classic. It offers five well-balanced CPU opponents and a serviceable view of the board. One gripe is that the game grinds to a halt after a match, forcing you to roll up the menu to call up the menu to call up the menu to review the board for the automatic rematch. It has the same issue, but since Reversi matches are typically shorter than chess games, it's [illegible]

[illegible]

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

SPACE HARRIER

PLATFORM: ARCADE PUBLISHER: SEGA
GENRE: SHOOTER ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1985

Phil T's Pick

The Master System port of this game hit the Virtual Console several months ago, but this is the real deal—the original arcade version of Sega's sci-fi shooter. The scaling graphics may not be as visually impressive as they once were, but the colorful worlds, creepy enemies, and fantastic music give the game a wonderful atmosphere that still holds up. Aesthetics aside, the gameplay is fast and full of intense action, making this game as much fun to play today as it was more than 20 years ago.

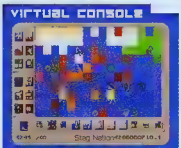
VIRTUAL CONSOLE

GENGHIS KHAN II: CLAN OF THE GRAY WOLF

PLATFORM: SUPER NES
PUBLISHER: KOEI
GENRE: STRATEGY
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1993

Genghis Khan II is a remarkably deep strategy game that will appeal to only a very select group of players. In it, you become the famous Mongol emperor and fight to expand your empire. The gameplay is very complex, but ultimately rewarding if you stick with it. Unfortunately, the obtuse menus will have you constantly referring to the manual for guidance. –PHIL T.

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

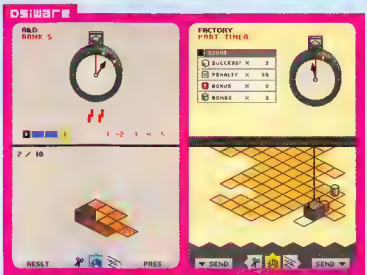


SIMEARTH: THE LIVING PLANET

PLATFORM: TURBOGRAFX CD
PUBLISHER: HUDSON
GENRE: SIMULATION
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1992

Forget SimCity—that's kids' stuff. Will Wright's SimEarth places you in charge of an entire planet. The vast number of options involved in making the environment suitable for advanced life-forms can be overwhelming, and the primitive graphics and frequent load times makes world creation a chore. If you can get past those faults, though, there is some deep gameplay to enjoy here. –PHIL T.

DSiWare



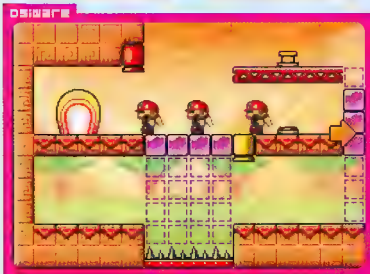
ART STYLE: BOXLIFE

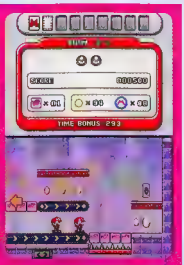
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO · GENRE: PUZZLE · NINTENDO POINTS: [illegible]

Developer Skip delivers, once again, with another installment in the Art Style series. Sure, Boxlife might have a pretty dull title, but the creators have managed to create a unique and addictive puzzle game built on an easy-to-grasp premise. Your goal is to fold six-square arrangements into cubes—a simple job at first, but one that becomes increasingly complex as you're tasked with cutting sheets into the proper arrangements. A smooth difficulty curve helps ease you into the possibilities, and figuring out the patterns quickly becomes an obsession, especially since you score better depending on how fast you overcome each challenge. Definitely worth checking out for puzzle fans. –CHRIS H.

Discontinued

DSiWare





MARIO VS. DONKEY KONG: MINIS MARCH AGAIN

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO · GENRE: ACTION/PUZZLE · NINTENDO POINTS: [illegible]

Chris H's Pick

Mario vs. Donkey Kong: Minis March Again! proves that sometimes less is definitely more. While the game retains the clever, fun, puzzle-oriented action of its retail predecessor, Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis, you now have less control over your characters (they keep on marching until they can't go any further) and less room for error, but the result is that you have to more carefully plan your way through each stage, adding up to a more challenging, more satisfying experience overall. There's a lot of content here, too; the game includes a whopping 100 stages in all, plus there's a deep custom-level editor that lets you share levels with friends. Simply put, Minis March Again! is one of the biggest games available through DSiWare, as well as one of the best.

Recommended

DSiWare

SUDOKU MASTER

PUBLISHER: HUDSON
GENRE: PUZZLE
NINTENDO POINTS: [illegible]

If you're not already a sudoku fan, this won't change your mind. If you do enjoy the number-crunching pastime, however, you'll like the solid digital version, which features 150 puzzles, an effective interface, and decent assist options. The price is right, too. –CHRIS H.

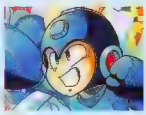
Recommended

WANTED!

We asked you to tell us what action games you most wanted to see on Virtual Console. You answered with games in which you destroy legions of the undead (Dracula X and Zombies Ate My Neighbors), raise shell (TMNT IV), and defeat the Maverick menace (Mega Man X). The editors were hungry for Mega Man as well, giving their top slot to Mega Man: The Wily Wars, an import-only compilation of enhanced versions of Mega Man 1-3.

READERS' MOST WANTED: ACTION GAMES

1 Dracula X: Rondo of Blood (TurboGrafx CD/Japan only)
2 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV: Turtles in Time (Super NES)
3 Zombies Ate My Neighbors (Super NES)
4 Mega Man X (Super NES)
5 Rolling Thunder (arcade)



NP STAFF'S MOST WANTED: ACTION GAMES

1 Mega Man: The Wily Wars (Genesis/Europe & Japan)
2 Dracula X: Rondo of Blood (TurboGrafx CD/Japan only)
3 The Revenge of Shinobi (Genesis)
4 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV: Turtles in Time (Super NES)
5 Strider (Genesis)

Thank you to everyone who voted in Nintendo Power's Virtual Console polls over the last several months! The polls are going away for the time being, but may return in the future.

PRE-VIEW

SEPTEMBER 2009

THIS MONTH IN PREVIEWS

A BOY AND HIS BLOB PG. 23
ANIMAL KINGDOM: WILDLIFE EXPEDITION PG. 33
ASTRO BOY: THE VIDEO GAME PG. 25
DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION PG. 35
DECA SPORTS 2 PG. 28
DRAGON BALL: REVENGE OF KING PICCOLO PG. 34
FOSSIL FIGHTERS PG. 33
HARVEST MOON DS: SUNSHINE ISLANDS PG. 30
KARAOKE REVOLUTION PG. 37
MINI NINJAS PG. 32
MURAMASA: THE DEMON BLADE PG. 26
NARUTO SHIPPUDEN: NINJA DESTINY 2 PG. 29
PHANTASY STAR Ø PG. 22
SPORE HERO PG. 36
SPORE HERO ARENA PG. 36
SPYBORGS PG. 24
STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS: REPUBLIC HEROES PG. 35
TORNADO OUTBREAK PG. 27
WIREWAY PG. 28

Stars Aligned

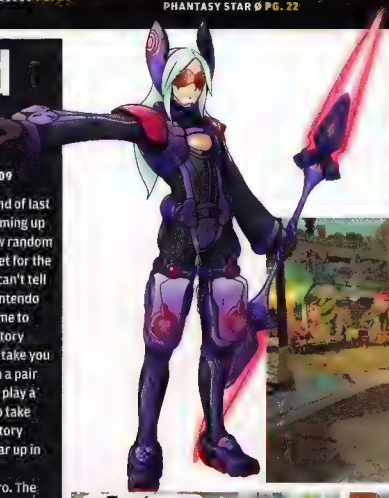
>PHANTASY STAR Ø

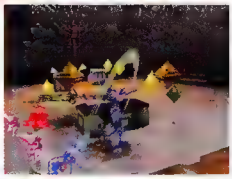
PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS • PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SONIC TEAM • RELEASE: WINTER 2009

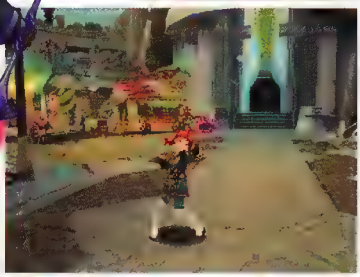
Phantasy Star Ø went live in Japan at the end of last year, and a healthy community remains, teaming up in parties of four to hunt down those last few random item drops. Alas, the servers are mighty quiet for the still-in-development English version, so we can't tell you much about how the game plays over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. But we've had plenty of time to mess around with the robust single-player Story mode, which offers a lengthy quest that will take you through each of the game's seven areas with a pair of AI-controlled partners at your side. You'll play a hero of your own creation, and you're free to take him or her online as well, which makes the Story mode a great opportunity to level up and gear up in anticipation of your network debut.

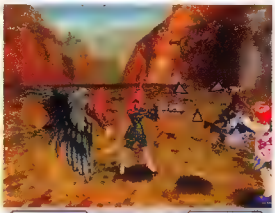
Of course, you needn't stop at a single hero. The game has enough save slots for three characters, and offers plenty of incentive to dabble in each of the three playable races. The story concerns a group of Newmen arriving from the moon to investigate the potential threat posed by human settlers on a still-wild planet, and events change considerably depending on the race of your hero; an ally in one character's story may be cast as a villain in another's. (Each version of the story even has its own exclusive FMV cut-scenes, beautifully animated by the famous animation studio GONZO.) In addition to giving you three perspectives on the story, creating multiple characters will allow you to put all your loot to good use. The hub town of Dairon City offers a Player Trunk where you can freely swap items among your save slots, allowing your Hunter to pass off those unequippable wands and bazookas to your magic-using force character and gun-savvy Ranger.

The gameplay is based on the original Dreamcast and GameCube releases of Phantasy Star Online, but has a few new wrinkles. You can charge up weapon strikes and spells to unleash flashy special attacks, and a roll button allows you to dodge enemy hits with panache. Other than those welcome additions, the game feels a lot like its predecessor, with solid combat and impressive bosses, but little in the way of variety. The concept is simple, but the visuals are not, with richly colored areas and a smooth, steady frame rate even when four characters are battling at once. We'll find out if it holds up as well online when Phantasy Star Ø ships this holiday season. –CASEY L.





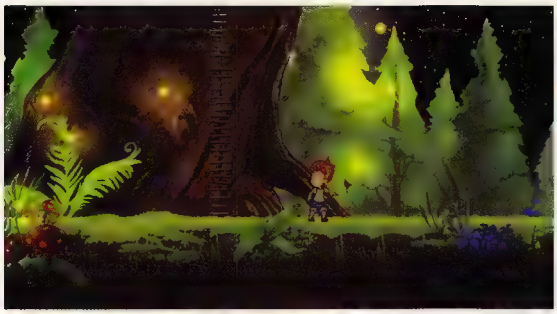




Cool Beans

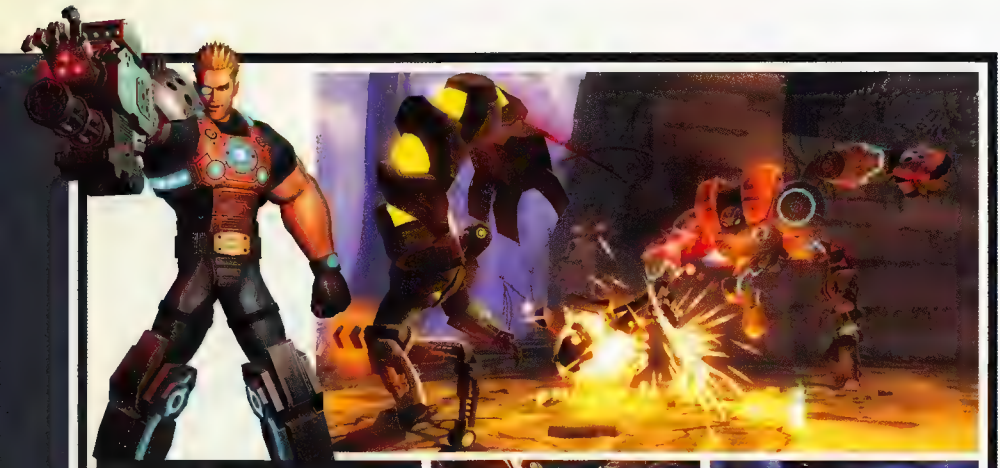
>A BOY AND HIS BLOB

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **MAJESCO**
DEVELOPER: **WAYFORWARD** • RELEASE: **OCTOBER 2009**



[Left] Look out below! In anvil form, the blob is great for smashing things–like enemies.

A boy, an alien blob, and jellybeans—it's a strange recipe for a video game, but judging by what we've played so far, it might just end up being one of the best titles of 2009 for the Wii console. In A Boy and His Blob, you play the titular boy, who—let's face it—is pretty helpless. About the only thing he can do on his own is jump, and not very far. Fortunately, he has an endless supply of jellybeans, and by feeding different flavors of beans to his blob buddy, he can make the blob change into various forms. Some of the transformations—such as the licorice ladder and the tangerine trampoline—will be familiar to anyone who played the original A Boy and His Blob on NES. Others, such as the pear parachute, the caramel cannon, and the berry balloon, are brand-new. Each transformation can be used to overcome obstacles and/or enemies. For example, a punch jellybean can create a hole that causes an enemy to fall into a pit and trigger a switch; a banana jellybean can turn the blob into an anvil that you can push off a ledge to smash through a floor; and by tossing the blob in his coconut form (initiated by a coconut-flavored bean, of course), you can safely detonate an explosive enemy from afar. You'll have to use both brains and platforming skills to get through 40 levels—including forests, swamps, caves, and machine-filled fortresses—that boast some of the most vibrant graphics and most intricate 2-D animations we've ever seen. The game looks simply gorgeous, and the music is equally epic. Secret routes, hidden treasures, and unlockable goodies promise to make this highly anticipated puzzle-platformer even more satisfying. – **CHRIS H.**



Bionic Brawler

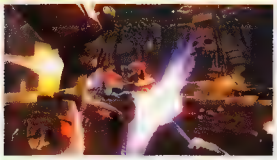
>SPYBORGS

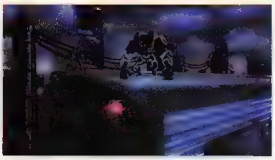
PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: BIONIC GAMES • RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2009

Spyborgs may feature a character-upgrade system, flashy motion-controlled finishing moves, special Spy Vision that lets you reveal cloaked objects and enemies, and all kinds of snazzy graphical effects, but at its core it's a true-blue arcade-style co-op beat-'em-up.

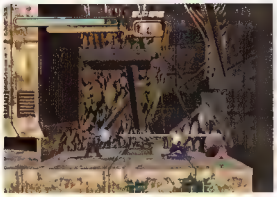
Taking control of Bouncer (the strong one), Clandestine (the quick one), or Stinger (the balanced one), you and a buddy (or an AI-controlled partner) will punch, kick, shoot, stab, slice, and pound your way through five chapters and more than 35 levels as you take on the traitorous Jackal and his robotic army. The action starts at Spyborg HQ (the Spyborgs are a team of cyborg and android heroes), which is under attack by Jackal's forces, but then you take the fight to the bad guys, invading their flying fortress, island base (including an evil underground volcanic lair), and cruise ship, eventually tracking them into the city and beyond. There's even the requisite elevator level.

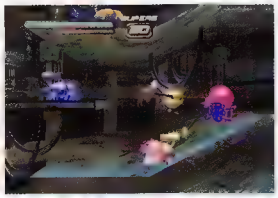
Along the way you'll fight off a variety of enemies, including small but aggressive Carrion troopers, Plazmat sharpshooters, crablike Quad Hunters, Grenadier demolitions experts, and some extremely cool bosses. In our last look at the game we mentioned the skyscraper-sized robot boss; recently we got to tangle with Jackal's lieutenant, Colt. At first Colt attacks on foot and doesn't pose much of a threat, but after taking damage he jumps into a spiderlike mech that can send out energy pulses and smaller attack drones; beat down the mech, and Colt uses tractor beams to upgrade his machine and push you to your limits. The only thing that seems to be missing from this classic-influenced brawler is meat lying around in garbage cans, but I guess you can't have everything. –CHRIS H.





[Above] Bouncer and Stinger are quite the duo. Spyborgs is all about co-op action.

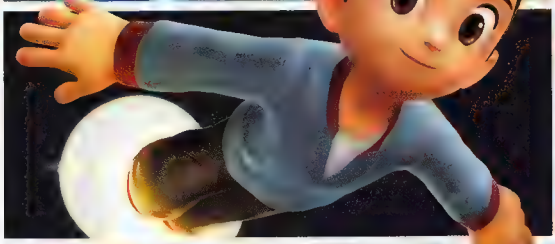




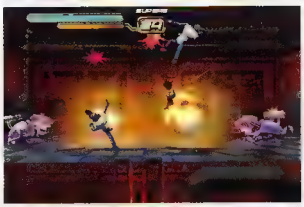
The Mightiest of Machines

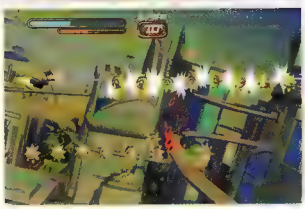
> ASTRO BOY: THE VIDEO GAME

PLATFORM: **Wii (also on DS)** • PUBLISHER: **D3PUBLISHER**
DEVELOPER: **HIGH VOLTAGE** • RELEASE: **OCTOBER 2009**



Now that we've spent more hands-on time with Astro Boy for Wii, we can comfortably say that it's much more than a game that's based on a movie that's based on the most beloved manga/anime ever to emerge from Japan. The developers at High Voltage were clearly fans of Astro Boy: Omega Factor (one of the best games released on GBA), and they no doubt want to ensure that their interpretation of the property stacks up favorably. To that end, Astro Boy is packed with technique and nuanced gameplay. The titular hero has abilities up the wazoo: basic moves (punches, kicks, throws, a finger laser), devastating superattacks (an arm cannon, butt-mounted machine guns, an aerial spin smash), and defensive capabilities (evasive dashes, slides, a bullet-absorption power). Fighting is only part of the fun; the game is loaded with obstacle-laden goodness—moving platforms, deadly spikes, electrified floors, and more. The resultant dance of destruction has you simultaneously avoiding traps, dodging incoming fire, and sending enemy robots careening across the screen and into each other (and to that great junkyard in the sky). And that's only half the action—the other half is pure aerial shooting reminiscent of R-Type or Gradius. Throw in upgradable abilities, optional gesture controls, 30-plus levels across eight chapters, and hardcore difficulty options that could make a seasoned gamer cry, and you get a game that may very well live up to the quality of its legendary namesake. —**CHRIS H.**





Deadly Beauty

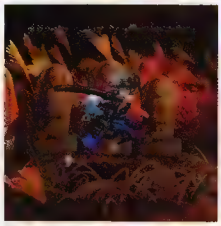
>MURAMASA: THE DEMON BLADE

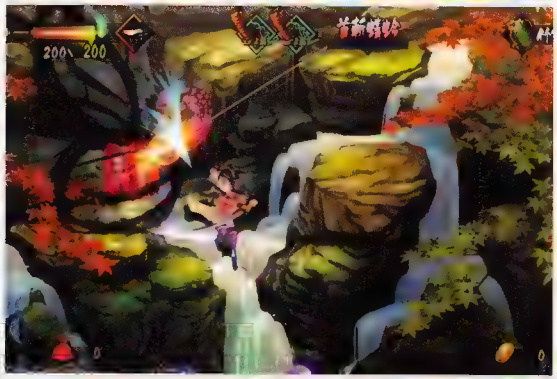
PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: IGNITION
DEVELOPER: VANILLAWARE • RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2009

We've been raving about Muramasa for months, but now that we've had a chance to spend some quality time with a full English version, we're more enthusiastic than ever. The game is absolutely stunning—that's been well established. But it's also a heck of a lot of fun. The combat is fast-paced and, if you play on the advanced difficulty setting, requires quite a bit of technique. Despite a fairly simple control scheme, this is no mere button-masher.

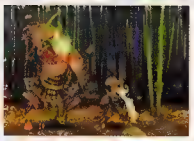
At the heart of the action lie the Demon Blades. Throughout the adventure, you'll gather Souls from fallen enemies and amass Spirit by eating (seriously), and these resources enable the game's titular swordsmith to forge new blades for your arsenal. There are more than 100 weapons in all, each with its own unique attributes and a devastating Secret Art. You can equip three of your trusty blades at once, and a simple tap of the C Button lets you switch between them on the fly.

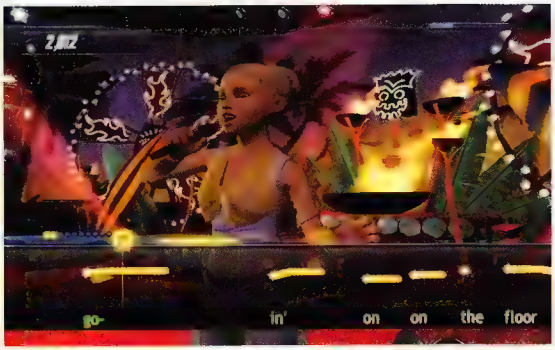
The US version of Muramasa will retain the original Japanese voice acting with English subtitles. That seems the right choice for a game so heavily inspired by the mythology of its native land. We also applaud Ignition for bringing the title here so quickly. In just a few short weeks, you'll be able to see for yourself what all the fuss is about. –STEVE T.

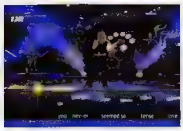




Thanks to music by Hitoshi Sakimoto (Final Fantasy Tactics, Odin Sphere), Muramasa sounds as good as it looks.







Just Sing It

>KARAOKE REVOLUTION

PLATFORM: Wii • **PUBLISHER:** KONAMI
DEVELOPER: BLITZ GAMES • **RELEASE:** NOVEMBER 2009

Konami was one of the first companies to put gamers' vocal cords to the test when it released the original Karaoke Revolution more than five years ago. The game was highly successful—and a lot of fun—but since then the brand has become diluted, and in recent years has been hidden beneath *American Idol* trappings. This fall, however, signals a return to the franchise's roots, as the latest game—simply titled Karaoke Revolution—comes to Wii. Using a USB microphone, you'll get to put words to 50 hit songs, including "Viva la Vida," by Coldplay, "What Hurts the Most," by Rascal Flatts, "I'm Yours," by Jason Mraz, "7 Things," by Miley Cyrus, "Just Dance," by Lady Gaga, and "So What," by Pink, as well as classic tunes such as Pat Benatar's "Love Is a Battlefield." Sing with proper pitch and rhythm to achieve stardom, or fail to do so and get booed off the stage. Customization options let you create your own character and singing venues, and numerous modes (such as Career mode, Quick Play, and a Party mode for up to 16 players) will keep you crooning for hours on end. –CHRIS H.

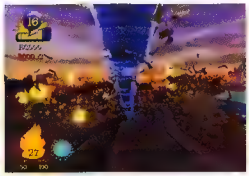
What a Twist!

>TORNADO OUTBREAK

PLATFORM: Wii • **PUBLISHER:** KONAMI
DEVELOPER: LOOSE CANNON STUDIOS
RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2009

Instead of focusing on the victims of a destructive tornado (à la *The Wizard of Oz* or *Twister*), Tornado Outbreak allows you to *be* the destructive tornado. Well, you're actually a space-faring being named Zephyr, who, along with his fellow Wind Warriors, uses twister powers to rescue Omegaton (with a name like that, he's got to be a good guy...right?). See, Omegaton is trapped in our universe and needs six orbs to return home—unfortunately for humankind, the orbs are on Earth, meaning Zephyr has to destroy everything to find them. As in PlayStation 2 game Katamari Damacy, however, you start small and increase in size as you suck up more objects. Additionally, you can't tear through areas willy-nilly; the sun's rays hurt you, so you have to stick to the shaded path. Omegaton has given you a device called the L.O.A.D. Starr that can create cover for a short while, though. To add time to the L.O.A.D. Starr's clock, you must find and absorb the orbs' guardians, the Fire Fliers. –JUSTIN C.

As a tornado, you'll travel across the globe with one goal: destroy everything.



Reshuffling the Deca

>DECA SPORTS 2

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **HUDSON**
DEVELOPER: **HUDSON** • RELEASE: **OCTOBER 2009**

As the name implies, Deca Sports 2 has 10 sports for you to play—and it's a pretty odd lot. In addition to the usual tennis and ice hockey, there's also kendo, speed skating, road racing, mogul skiing, dodge ball, darts, pétanque, and synchronized swimming. For the most part, the different sports make use of the Wii Remote controller (and some require the Nunchuk) in mostly logical ways. When playing darts, for example, you hold the Wii Remote as you would a real-life dart (or a pencil), pressing the A and B Buttons with your thumb and index finger. To throw, you gesture like you're throwing a dart. (Just make sure that you don't actually let go of your remote!) Adding a layer of strategy to the game, there are eight different teams to choose from before you start playing a particular sport. Each team has specific strengths; some are physically strong but comparatively slow, some are faster but physically weaker, and some are fairly balanced all-around.
—JUSTIN C.

[Below left] While you should always wear the wrist strap when using the Wii Remote, it's especially important when playing darts. [Below right] Tennis plays exactly how you'd expect.

[Above] Launching yourself from wires might not seem like the most effective method of transportation, but it works for Wiley Springer. It gets him all over the world—even to the pyramids. Just watch out for the giant bumblebees of doom.

Stretch Yourself

>WIREWAY

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS** • PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **NOW PRODUCTIONS** • RELEASE: **FALL 2009**

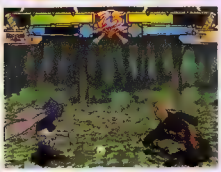
Stairs? Ladders? Elevators? Those methods of ascension are for chumps. Wiley Springer, the adorable alien star of WireWay, knows that elastic bands are the only way to go if you need to reach great heights in a hurry. To help the little guy reach the exit in each stage, use the stylus to grab onto the wire that Wiley hangs on to. By pulling the wire back, you set the strength and angle of his launch. Release the wire to send him flying to the next grab point. Of course, it's not quite as simple as that. Environmental obstacles and evil aliens impede Wiley's progress, so some creative flicking is required to help our hero reach his goal. There are also multiple paths to explore and hidden items to collect, so referring to the onscreen map is a must. Aside from the game's Quest mode, extra modes allow you to create your own stages and share them with friends or challenge others to multiplayer races.
—PHIL T.

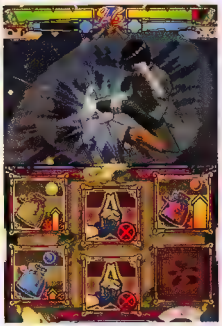
Duel of the Fates

> NARUTO SHIPPUDEN: NINJA DESTINY 2

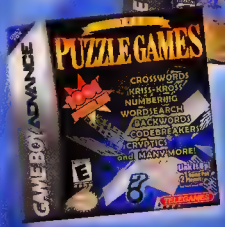
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS** • PUBLISHER: **TOMY**
DEVELOPER: **DREAM FACTORY**
RELEASE: **SEPTEMBER 2009**

The original Naruto: Ninja Destiny was a fundamentally good 3-D fighting game for the Nintendo DS system, but it was a bit light on features. Now the sequel's on its way, and we're happy to see that there's a bit more to it this time around. As the title suggests, Naruto Shippuden: Ninja Destiny 2 is all about the new Shippuden characters and designs. Additionally, the Story mode follows the first story arc from the anime and manga, in which the older and wiser Hidden Leaf ninjas fight against the evil Akatsuki. (There are more than 30 characters in all.) Unlike its predecessor, which was a fairly straightforward fighting game, Ninja Destiny 2 has some RPG-like exploration: you run around mazelike environments, picking up items and fighting in random battles. Although you don't gain experience from these confrontations in Story mode, you do in the single-player Quest mode. If you'd prefer straight-up fighting, you can do that, too, either against a computer-controlled opponent, or against a buddy via local wireless. —JUSTIN C.





FAMILY PLAYTIME



AVAILABLE AT

BEST BUY · GameStop · amazon.com · TOYS"R"US

TELEGAMES

Web site: www.telegames.com

Fun in the Sun

> HARVEST MOON DS: SUNSHINE ISLANDS

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS** • PUBLISHER: **NATSUME**
DEVELOPER: **MARVELOUS** • RELEASE: **SUMMER 2009**

The Harvest Moon franchise keeps growing on the DS. Sunshine Islands marks the seventh game for the system (including Puzzle de Harvest Moon and the Rune Factory titles). In a familiar tale, you inherit a small farm on the outskirts of town, and you must raise crops and animals to earn a living. You can hire sprites to help you with your efforts, such as in watering the crops or feeding animals. But they'll also hang around shops and houses for you, temporarily lowering the cost of goods or helping you get in better graces with a town member.

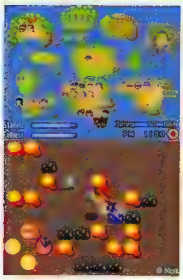
The game's title comes from another aspect of the sprites' duties. The islands you inhabit are facing ruin after a huge earthquake caused many of them to crumble into the sea. With your help, the sprites will cause new islands to rise straight out of the water, giving you new places to explore. Each island has its own theme; for example, on Animal Island you can befriend helpful animals such as monkeys and badgers, provided you feed them the snacks they crave.

If you played last year's Island of Happiness, you'll recognize many of the key characters in Sunshine Island, including the kindly caretaker Taro and the animal-equipment storekeeper Mirabelle. There are many new characters to meet and befriend, as well, including Witchkin, the niece of the ever-discussed Harvest Goddess. Sunshine Island keeps the graphic style of Island of Happiness, too, marked by adorable, round-faced characters and cartoonish animals. One major change from the previous game is the control scheme—you're no longer required to use only the touch screen for all your actions. The Control Pad moves your rancher, while the buttons perform specific actions.

Look for Harvest Moon: Sunshine Islands to sprout up in stores late this summer. **–CHRIS SH.**

[Above] Ganon just isn't as scary as when he conquered Hyrule. Oh, wait. Wrong guy.

[Above] You can train your animals for special festival events by playing minigames.



Because Jess plays video games the ESRB (that's the Entertainment Software Rating Board) understands that some games aren't right for everyone. Just like movies, every game has a rating. And those ratings come from the ESRB.
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

© 2006 ESRB All rights reserved.

www.ESRB.org

Revenge of the Adorable

>MINI NINJAS

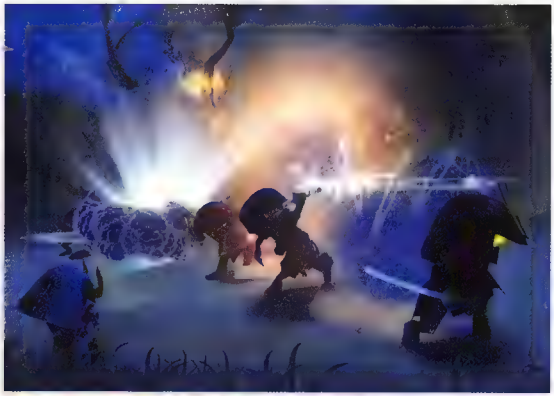
PLATFORM: **Wii (ALSO ON DS)** • PUBLISHER: **EIDOS**
DEVELOPER: **IO INTERACTIVE**
RELEASE: **SEPTEMBER 2009**

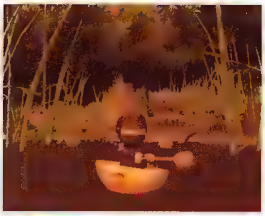
Developer IO Interactive is best known for the Mature-rated Hitman franchise, which revolves around a well-dressed assassin-for-hire coming up with all sorts of creative ways to brutally dispatch his targets. We love the series, but all of that darkness and violence has to wear on a team after a while. The developers have obviously decided to think happy thoughts for a change with Mini Ninjas. Granted, the game still features one of history's deadliest occupations, but you've never seen it represented so charmingly.

Pint-sized protagonist Hiro is a young ninja-in-training when the Evil Samurai Warlord returns from centuries of banishment and begins using magic to turn innocent woodland critters into an army of fearsome soldiers. The balance of nature is disrupted in the process, unleashing fierce storms and devastating natural disasters. The Ninja Master sends his finest warriors to investigate, but when they disappear one after another, he must eventually turn to Hiro.

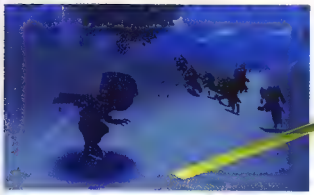
Fortunately, our diminutive lead is an especially gifted pupil, his skills many and varied. He can sneak through tall grass to catch enemies unaware. A time-stopping Power Attack lets him target multiple foes and cut them down in an instant. He has the ability to wall-jump, scamper across ropes, use his hat as a boat, go fishing from said boat, and wield all the expected tools of the trade, from shuriken to smoke bombs. He'll also learn various types of ninja magic, which allow him to not only make quick work of adversaries via a fireball or lightning bolt, but also to pass into the spirit realm and take control of animals. Hiro can possess anything from a frog to a panda, and each comes in handy for different purposes. Smaller critters are good for sneaking past the warlord's forces without a fight, for instance, whereas boars can simply barrel through large assemblies with ease. Throughout his travels, Hiro can gather various plants, as well, and by purchasing recipes, combine certain types of flora to create potions and equipment.

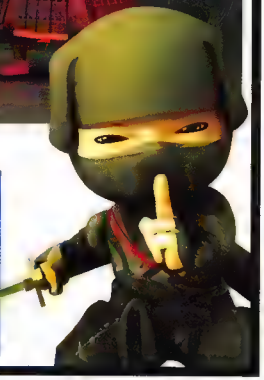
But there are some obstacles even Hiro can't overcome. That's where his friends come in. Strongman Futo accompanies Hiro from the very beginning, and specializes in taking down large foes with his hammer. Four additional ninjas will join the cause before all is said and done, and you can swap between them at any time. Despite the cuddly exterior, there's a lot to Mini Ninjas. Our play time thus far has been limited to just a few levels, so it's too early to say how well all of these ideas will be put into practice. We'll know soon enough, however; look for the review next month. **–STEVE T.**

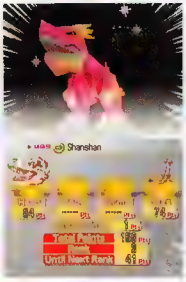




[Above] Futo's not big on stealth. He prefers the direct approach, courtesy of a big hammer.







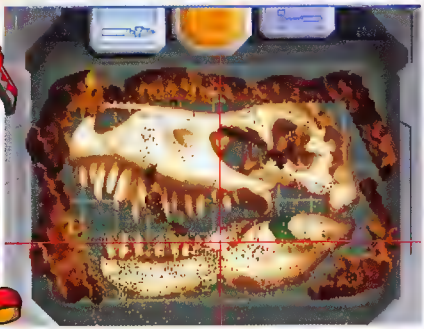
Dig It

>FOSSIL FIGHTERS

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **RED ENTERTAINMENT**
RELEASE: **AUGUST 2009**

If you enjoy dinosaurs, Pokémon-style critter collecting, strategic combat, or reanimating the dead, then Fossil Fighters has something for you. The game tasks you with bringing dinosaurs back to life as powered-up "vivosaurs" (more than 100 of them in all) to compete in a fighting league. To do so, you must first visit dig sites and use sonar pings to reveal the location of buried bones; if you find a head you can bring the dinosaur to life, and arms and legs can be added to your vivosaur to give it special abilities. You must clean a fossil in a stylus-based minigame before you can use it, and the better job you do of cleaning, the more powerful your vivosaur.

Combat is turn-based, with one member of your four-vivosaur team set to attack aggressively, two set in support positions, and one serving as a backup. Battles aren't as complex as those in a full-on strategy-RPG, but there are still plenty of tactics and stats to chew on. And if you need a break from the story mode, you can connect wirelessly with friends to battle or trade fossils. –**CHRIS SL.**

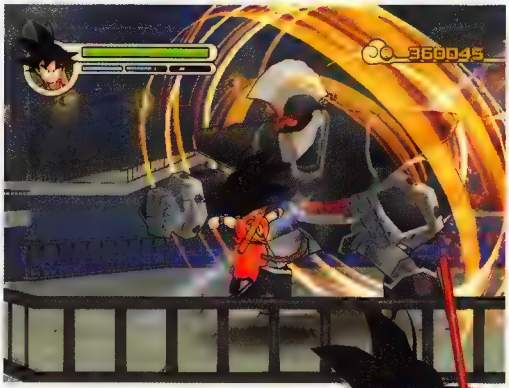


Gorillas in Your Midst

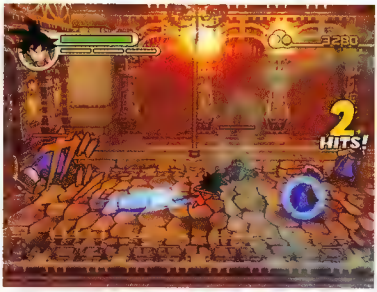
>ANIMAL KINGDOM: WILDLIFE EXPEDITION

PLATFORM: **WII** • PUBLISHER: **NATSUME**
DEVELOPER: **SUCCESS** • RELEASE: **SEPTEMBER 2009**

Welcome to Animal Island, a peaceful paradise where exotic animals run free and live in harmony with nature. As a young photographer, your job is to patrol the island and capture the animals' natural beauty on film. Animal Kingdom: Wildlife Expedition takes a few cues from the N64 classic Pokémon Snap; for example, you explore the island by vehicle along a set path, hoping to catch a glimpse of something pictureworthy. Unlike in Snap, however, when something catches your eye—be it a cloud of dust or a moving shrub—you point at the screen with the Wii Remote to investigate, which lets you leave the car and explore your surroundings, allowing you to find and photograph beasts such as zebras, giraffes, gnus, elephants, and gorillas. (You'll find different animals on different parts of the island.) At the end of each day's run, you'll send your pics to your editor for an evaluation, earning medals for good photos and for completing special assignments. –**CHRIS H.**



The blue icon is your indication to reach out and crush someone.

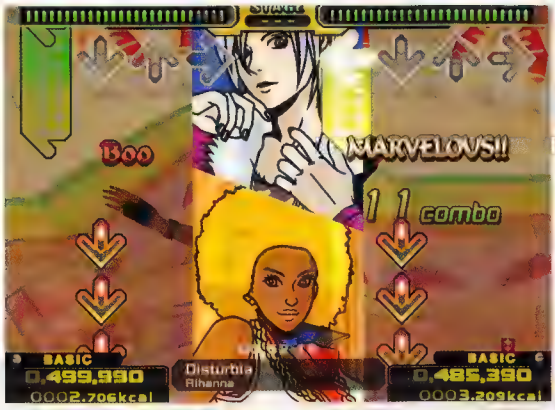


Young Dragons

>DRAGON BALL: REVENGE OF KING PICCOLO

PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI
DEVELOPER: NAMCO BANDAI • RELEASE: OCTOBER 2009

Before Dragon Ball Z, before Dragon Ball GT, before Super Saiyans, before Vegeta, before Cell, before Buu, there was just plain old Dragon Ball—a story about a monkey-tailed boy named Goku who stood up for good, beat down evil, and journeyed the world for wish-granting Dragon Balls. In Dragon Ball: Revenge of King Piccolo you'll get to experience that action firsthand as you guide Goku through multiple story arcs of the legendary anime and manga franchise, from his fight against the Red Ribbon Army to his ascent in the World Martial Arts Tournament to his showdown with King Piccolo. As you'd expect from a game with the Dragon Ball name, most of the gameplay revolves around using Goku's fighting prowess to beat back waves of enemy thugs, beasts, and robots, but the game features a good dose of platforming, as well. A context-specific grapple button lets you cling to certain objects in the environments, allowing for some cool aerial acrobatics. Once you've knocked enemies into a state of vulnerability, you can grapple with them, too—which often results in Goku piledriving his enemies into (or straight through) the floor. As you defeat foes you'll earn power-ups to help keep you going, including money, tasty meat to refill your health bar, and potions to raise your supermove meter (required for executing Goku's trademark Kamehameha attack). In addition to a nine-chapter adventure mode, the game features a one-on-one fighting mode (in which you can play as Goku or 16 other characters, such as Krillin and Jackie Chun) and a gallery mode full of unlockable goodies. —CHRIS H.



Boogie Board

>DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION

PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: KONAMI
DEVELOPER: KONAMI • RELEASE: OCTOBER 2009

Though it may lack a subtitle, the latest installment of Dance Dance Revolution isn't wanting for new features. In fact, Konami touts this as the most significant evolution of the franchise in years. On Wii, a big part of that is compatibility with the Wii Balance Board. You can still get down with a traditional DDR pad, of course, but the Balance Board offers a new way to play: by shaking your booty. Rather than showing you where to step, the scrolling arrows direct you on how to move your hips: forward, back, left, or right. For someone rhythmically challenged like me, you can't help but feel a bit silly at first. Once you get the hang of it, though, this new mode works surprisingly well. On the music front, you'll find 30 licensed master tracks ranging from Rihanna's "Disturbia" to LCD Soundsystem's "Daft Punk is Playing at My House," as well as 20 original songs. An all-new Workout mode rounds out this revolution, though details on that remain under wraps. –STEVE T.

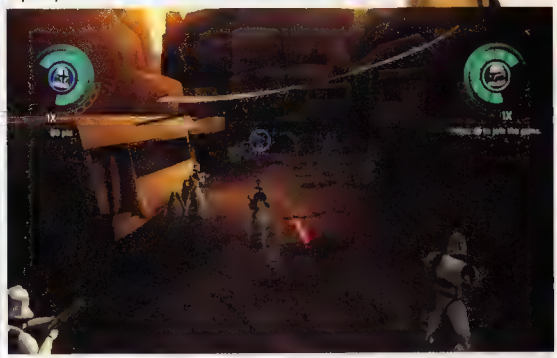
Destroy All Droids!

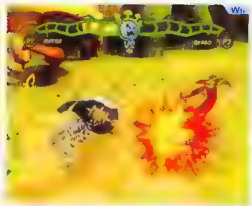
>STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS: REPUBLIC HEROES

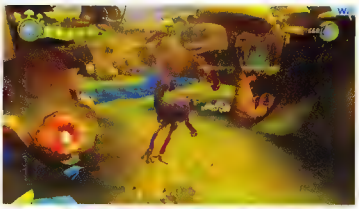
PLATFORM: Wii (ALSO ON DS) • PUBLISHER: LUCASARTS
DEVELOPER: KROME STUDIOS
RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2009

When the Separatists' droids are taking over the galaxy, who are you going to call? The Jedi are the most obvious choice, but even they need some help handling the sheer number of baddies. Good thing they've got an army of Jango Fett clones ready to help them out! (Clones that would absolutely positively never, ever turn on the Jedi.) In Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes, you (and a friend via drop-in co-op) have the opportunity to play as both the Jedi and clone troopers, using the Wii Remote-and-Nunchuk combo to slash and blast pesky battle droids. As a Jedi, you swing the remote like a lightsaber (or just tap B); as a clone trooper, you point at your enemies with the remote and shoot them with B. Jedi are agile and can do some platforming, whereas clones are much more grounded and can take cover. This might make it sound like the Jedi have more fun, but the clone trooper-centric levels offer a nice change of pace. –JUSTIN C.

Hopefully these clones are better shots than the ones in the movies.







Evolutionary War

>SPORE HERO

PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: MAXIS • RELEASE: FALL 2009

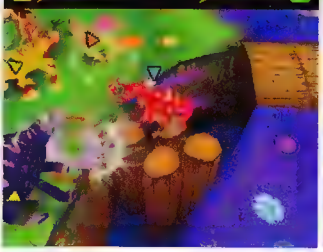
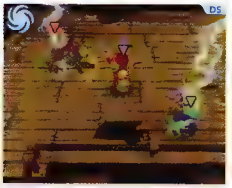
Meteors fall from the sky onto a blue planet. From the wreckage, a hero emerges. No, it's not Superman—it's an alien that you can mold into virtually any form you want. In Spore Hero, you are thrown onto an open world where the inhabitants need your help. See, an evil creature crashed on the planet at the same time you did, and his red meteor rocks are negatively affecting the planet's population. Because you're immune to his influence, you're the citizens' only hope. But your foe is evolving quickly. To catch up, you need to acquire new body parts by completing the tasks the denizens give you. For example, you have to fight a whole tribe of spiked beings—aptly called Spikees—to earn their respect (an assignment that gives you some practice for Spore Hero's two-player Versus mode). Simply unlocking components isn't enough, however; you also have to collect blue meteor fragments scattered across the world—they're the currency used to purchase the unlocked parts.

>SPORE HERO ARENA

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS • PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: MAXIS • RELEASE: FALL 2009

Like its Wii sibling, Spore Hero Arena features creature customization and red and blue meteors. In this game, however, your spacecraft was struck by blue meteors, sending you crashing to the planet's surface. These space rocks are actually a blessing in disguise—they protect you from the corrupting power of the red meteor fragments. Unfortunately, the red shards were already used to create medals for the strongest warriors across the galaxy, so you have to participate in arena-based combat to knock some sense into those fighters. Movement is controlled with the stylus, and you press left or A to slash, up or X to bite, right or Y to spit, and down or B to block. You also have an arsenal of Bio-Powers that are activated by holding L or R and tapping the appropriate icon on the touch screen. If you want to test your mettle against human opponents, you can battle up to three friends via local wireless, or one buddy via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. –JUSTIN C.

[Below] When fighting, pay attention to your surroundings—you'll lose a life if you fall off the edge.

Are you playing to your full potential?
Build your skills now at:
www.massiveblips.com

Massive blips
www.massiveblips.com

Get a Competitive Edge
Arm yourself with the latest tips,
tools and strategies from around the web

More Knowledge, More Power
One-stop access to up-to-date information
from expert sites, large and small

Share, Debate, Discuss
Expand your skills in a community
of serious MMO fanatics like you

MassiveBlips.com
Community-driven MMO news and information

Part of the DailyRadar Network www.dailyradar.com

CRYSTAL-CLEAR DIFFERENCE

BY CHRIS HOFFMAN | PLATFORM WII | PUBLISHER/DEVELOPER SQUARE ENIX | RELEASE WINTER 2009/2010

The development cycle for Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers has been an unusual one. When Square Enix unveiled the game more than three years ago at E3 2006, it looked impressive, sure, with all indications pointing to a typical multiplayer Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles game, albeit now on the Wii system. But little information about the game followed; other Crystal Chronicles titles came and went, but news about The Crystal Bearers was nil. At one point the game was rumored to be canceled. But earlier this year the developers proved that that was not the case. The Crystal Bearers re-emerged, and it was unlike any Final Fantasy we'd seen before. The game sported a new look, a new single-player focus, a new hero, a new emphasis on stylish motion-controlled action, even a dynamic new logo. Nintendo Power recently had a chance to delve even deeper into the world of The Crystal Bearers, and after spending a few hours there, we have no qualms declaring that this is one of the most exciting Final Fantasy games in ages.

The changes start with the outlook of the Crystal Chronicles world. In past games in the series, the population was made up primarily of four distinct but essentially equal races: humanlike Clavats, crafty and rugged Selkies, stout but powerful Lilties, and lanky, magic-wielding Yukes. But 1,000 years have passed since the story of the original Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles on GameCube, and in that time there's been tremendous conflict and loss. In an event known as the Great War, the Lilties destroyed the Yuke Crystal, apparently wiping the Yukes from existence. The Lilties enjoyed newfound prosperity, became the world's dominant race, and ushered in a new age of science and reason. Lower on the social ladder are the Clavats, who mostly live as peaceful farmers or servants, and the Selkies, who have become a class of carefree outlaws who tend to rebel against Lilty rule. Though the world is now more or less at peace, there are underlying themes of racial oppression and genocide—not exactly lighthearted stuff.

"It is a strangely distorted world—one that was supposed to be lush with nature and in a pre-industrialized state, with each race living within the boundaries of their distinct cultures," comments director Toshiyuki Itahana. "Instead, one of the races suddenly acquires a technology far more advanced than the others, and gains power. Players will witness some exciting scenes that portray this sort of distortion, like one in which a luxury airship, flying with an air of superiority, soars over a field of chocobo-riding people."

To match the aged-up tone, The Crystal Bearers features a more mature look; the cutesy, superdeformed designs of previous Crystal Chronicles titles are replaced by more-realistically proportioned characters. While still sporting a sense of playful whimsy, the intricately detailed visuals are now more in step with what you'd expect from the recent mainline Final Fantasy titles.

SPELL BINDING

Magic is forbidden in the new Lilty-controlled era of technology, yet there are those who can freely wield its arcane powers—the so-called crystal bearers. Evidently, crystal bearers have used their abilities with disastrous results in the past, so the general populace avoids and fears them with good reason. And that, not surprisingly, is where you come in—straight into the shoes of Layle, a 21-year-old free-spirited crystal bearer for hire who can use the power of telekinesis.

"Layle has always been prone to becoming 'involved in the mess' because of his special powers, and has tackled many adventures in his time," explains Itahana. "The events of this game are just another episode in his hectic life,

[Above] The relationship between Layle and Belle promises to be one of the most entertaining aspects of The Crystal Bearers.

so in designing him we didn't want to include aspects of a young boy that would suggest a coming development. We wanted to create more of a 'completed' young man. His jacket (complete with chainmail!) has a weathered, broken-in look worthy of one that has survived many a dangerous scene."

Indeed, Layle seems drawn to trouble—or trouble is drawn to him. In the game's opening scenes, Layle is working as an escort for the airship *Alexis II* when it's attacked by a group of purple winged beasts. Confident in his power, Layle throws himself into the wild blue yonder and, while in freefall, uses his abilities to telekinetically wield a massive gun with which he dispatches his foes.

Immediately afterward, Layle finds himself on the airship's deck, face-to-helmet with a Yuke that emerges from a portal. For someone who's supposed to be extinct, the Yuke seems pretty healthy (read: strong), and a fantastically choreographed fight breaks out between it and Layle. The clash ends with the Yuke—named Amidatellion—getting the upper hand and draining the airship's engine power into a crystal idol. With the ship losing altitude, Amidatellion flees on one of his winged creatures, leaving Layle to use his telekinesis to keep the airship aloft while steering it safely to the capital city of Alfitaria.

GIRL TROUBLE

Layle ends up in more hot water not long after entering the city, when he gets caught up in a pursuit between the city guards and an alluring Selkie named Belle. Despite Layle's earlier heroics, the guards, predictably, turn their attention toward him for using magic. Layle and Belle escape the city by crashing through a window, and though Belle tries to sneak off by using Layle as a decoy, Layle keeps her duplicity in check long enough to allow them both to race away on a chocobo-pulled cart, the guards close behind.

"[Belle] is the troublemaker of this story, as well as a key individual responsible for getting Layle mixed up in the drama," Itahana says. "She is extremely good at sneaking into places, and finds her way on to the luxury airship that appears at the beginning of the game, calling herself a photog-

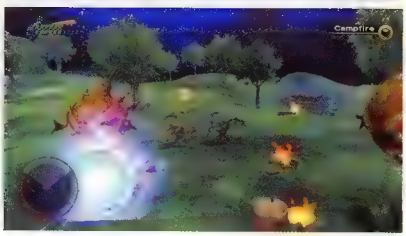
rapher. But this is all just an act. She is only concerned for her own benefits, and Layle ends up getting dragged along. She is a charming, crafty young woman."

The interplay between Layle and Belle seems to be one of the highlights of the adventure—one that emphasizes the game's focus on strong characters and a great story. The back-and-forth verbal banter and one-upsmanship between the two is natural and witty (think Han Solo and Princess Leia in *The Empire Strikes Back*), and has just the right touch of humor—at one point, after Layle gets knocked unconscious while saving both himself and Belle from a dangerous fall, he wakes to find that Belle has "borrowed" his wallet for "safekeeping." The top-tier voice acting makes their interactions even more convincing; this might be a rare case in which the English voice-overs are superior to the Japanese.

In addition to Belle, you'll come across many other complex and noteworthy characters, such as Althea, a goodhearted Lilty princess who's trying to find out more about the return of the Yukes and what it means to the world; Keiss, Layle's profit-hungry sometimes-business-partner (or is that conspirator?); and Jegran, the strong and dictatorial captain of the Lilty Kingdom Guards who uses his lofty position to push others around. You even meet a Lilty incarnation of Final Fantasy mainstay Cid, who this time appears as the kindly former chief engineer of the kingdom.

the CRYSTAL METHOD

Of course, all the great characters in the world don't mean much in a game that doesn't play well, but we're pretty certain that won't be an issue in The Crystal Bearers. The bulk of the gameplay revolves around using Layle's telekinetic powers to interact with the world and its inhabitants in a variety of ways. When you're running through the city, for example, you can grab unsuspecting people (by pointing at them with the Wii Remote controller, holding B for a second, then flicking the remote) and shake the cash out of their pockets—no wonder folks don't like crystal bearers! On the other hand, you can also earn the citizens' gratitude by grabbing and stopping giant rolling spheres after a sculpture collapses. And those uses of telekinesis are only the beginning. Can't get through a time-activated locked door? Then use your powers to adjust the clock. Want to cross a massive gap? Then grapple onto a



[Above] Bahamut is back! Get ready for an epic boss encounter.
[Left] Nothing will sway Amidatellion from his mission.

[Below] Cid's totally stylin' in his shades.

hook dangling from the ceiling and swing across. Need to open a door? Try grabbing and flipping a nearby lever. Desire that treasure chest on a high ledge? Just pull it to you.

Combat involves the same play mechanics. Instead of carrying a weapon, Layle simply picks up enemies and throws them (you point with the remote and press B to direct the throw), or uses nearby objects (boulders, cacti, barrels, other enemies, etc.) to clobber his foes. In an awesome boss battle against the dreaded Bahamut (summoned by Amidatellion, no less), you must hurl swords into the massive beast, then grapple onto the blades, using them as handholds to scale the creature, and eventually reach a spear on his tail that you can use to inflict significant damage.

According to Itahana, you can even use some enemies to your advantage after you grab them. "When you are holding certain monsters, you can use their special ability. For example, while you are holding a goblin with a bow, you can make him shoot arrows to attack other monsters," he says.

a HERO *in* ACTION

If you don't think this sounds much like an RPG, you're dead right.

CHRONICLING *the* CHRONICLES

Square Enix made waves during the GameCube era when it announced that the Final Fantasy series was returning to Nintendo systems after a lengthy absence. But it wasn't the same old Final Fantasy—it was Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles, which offered a completely different take on the world of Final Fantasy. Though The Crystal Bearers may be the best Crystal Chronicles entry yet, the other games in the series are no slouches either.

FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES (GAMECUBE, 2004)
With a focus on cooperative multiplayer action, the original Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles broke new ground for the Final Fantasy franchise. It was also the first big game in Nintendo's push for GameCube-to-Game Boy Advance connectivity.

FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES: RING OF FATES (DS, 2008)
Ring of Fates brought the Crystal Chronicles formula to DS. The game had distinct modes for single-player and multiplayer, and there was a stronger emphasis on story. The game takes place thousands of years before the original Crystal Chronicles.

FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES: MY LIFE AS A KING (WiiWARE, 2008)
One of the WiiWare launch titles, My Life as a King was unlike the previous games in the series. The game was more of a creative simulation, and instead of going out to fight monsters, it was your job as king to order heroes to do it for you.

FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES: ECHOES OF TIME (Wii/DS, 2009)
The big innovation in Echoes of Time was the ability to play the game over Wi-Fi. The Wii and DS versions were compatible so friends could play co-op even if they had the game on different systems.

FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES: MY LIFE AS A DARKLORD (WiiWARE, 2009)
Recently released in Japan, My Life as a Darklord is a strategy game that lets you see things from the bad guys' perspective. You'll use traps and monsters to stop the heroes from invading your abode. The North American version will arrive this year.

the AMAZING RACES

If there's one defining characteristic of the Crystal Chronicles games, it's that the people of the world are made up of four distinct races (or tribes). Each tribe's place in the world has changed somewhat in The Crystal Bearers, but each group still has its own unique traits.

CLAVATS

Clavats are the group that's most like humans. In the past, they were the most balanced characters, but now they're known for being peace-loving citizens that usually work as servants or laborers. The main character of The Crystal Bearers, Layle, is a Clavat, and he's obviously an exception to the rule.

SELKIES

Though physically similar to Clavats, Selkies are a bit on the wilder side, and in days gone by were known for dressing in furs and stolen goods, as well as for their prowess with ranged weapons. They're still rebellious in The Crystal Bearers, and have organized a guild to stand up to the Lilties. Noteworthy Selkies include Belle and Keiss.

LILTIES

In the previous games, Lilties were short, stout warriors and alchemists. Long ago they controlled a mighty empire, and they do once again in The Crystal Bearers thanks to their technological and scientific skills. They've apparently been taking their vitamins, too—they're much taller than they were. Princess Althea, Jegran, and Cid are all Lilties.

YUKES

Yukes were once known for being skilled magic users, as well as for wearing strange armor that gave them an almost comical appearance. The joke's over now, though, as they were erased from existence when the Yuke Crystal was destroyed in the Great War. But now a mysterious Yuke, Amidatellion, has appeared, and all bets are off.

There is a status screen (with attributes for attack, defense, focus, target range, and luck), and you can equip three types of accessories (earrings, rings, and amulets), but all indicators put The Crystal Bearers firmly in the action-adventure category. As far as we know, there are no traditional spells, no weapons, and no usable item inventory. (There are shops, however; though they weren't implemented in our preview build, crafting and the Mognet appear to be back.)

Furthermore, as cool as it is to run through the environments—tossing aside fools, objects, and enemies alike—it's only one type of action you engage in. In the aforementioned aerial battle with Amidatellion's flying creatures, you point at the screen with the Wii Remote to blast bad guys, and when Layle takes command of the *Alexis II*, you get to fly it with the Control Stick. (A broken airship, by the way, handles like a dead whale.) When fleeing by chocobo-drawn cart, you mostly rely on your telekinesis to thwart your pursuers, but you also get to engage in a remote-waggling minigame to knock enemies away when they get too close. There promises to be even more variety as the adventure progresses.

"You will be able to experience something similar to snowboarding on a snowy mountain, help harvest crops on the farm, and even dance. A hero must have a wide range of skills," asserts Itahana.

WILD, WILD WEST

No matter what kind of activity we were engaged in, we couldn't help but get drawn in by the game's impressive sights and sounds. Some areas, such as the city of Alfitaria, the nearby underground ruins of a Yuke city, and the surrounding grassy, tree-filled hills and canyons, are simply gorgeous; they feel like environments in a traditional, numbered Final Fantasy title. But the farther you get from the big city, the more the environments resemble the early American

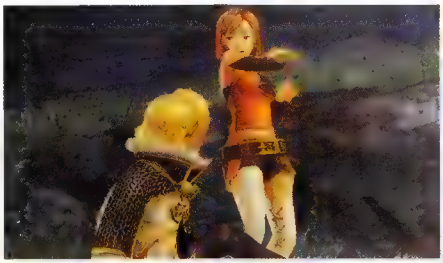
frontier—parched earth, towering stone formations, and cacti-filled wildlands—punctuated with funky music that fuses uniquely country-western sounds (a harmonica, for instance) with modern rock. The industrial village of Bridgetown was especially eye-catching; you can practically feel the wrought iron under your feet (the game's texture work is stunning) and taste the dust blowing past as gears turn, turbines spin, and pistons move in and out.

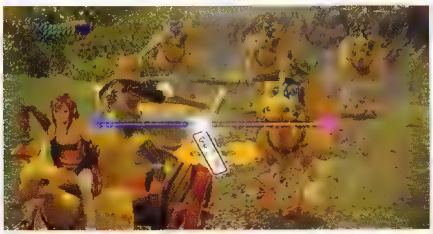
Layle gets pulled deeper into the events surrounding Amidatellion (who, it turns out, is also a Crystal Bearer) as the adventure continues, and you'll get to explore a wide range of breathtaking environments, from coastal lands to chilly snowfields to scorching deserts, complete with Final Fantasy's trademark cactuars. When walking won't cut it, you can even hitch a ride on a chocobo. And although the game is quite straightforward early on, it eventually opens up with a world of possibilities.

"As the story progresses, there will be a lot more freedom in choice of areas to explore, as well as means of transportation," Itahana remarks. "This freedom is the essential element to enjoying Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers. The experience is very linear in the beginning, but that is merely an entryway to draw players into the world...."

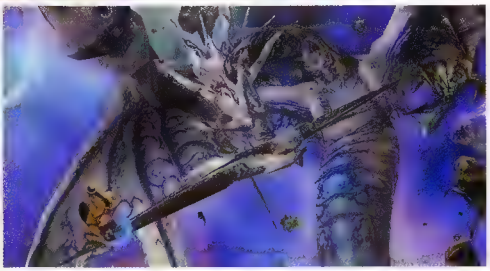
Judging by what we've seen so far, pulling players into the adventure won't be a problem. The game promises to be packed not only with fun action, compelling characters, and sky-high production values, but also a plot that offers plenty of drama and twists as it progresses. Amidatellion repeatedly talks about using crystal energy to complete "the Resurrection," so is the Yuke really a villain, or is it simply trying to revive its lost brethren?

You'll get the answer to that question and many more when the game arrives this coming winter, but at least one thing is already certain: Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers will be unlike anything you've experienced from the Final Fantasy series.





Nothing stops a pursuing soldier like a good shake of the Wii Remote.



FANTASY FORGER

Toshiyuki Itahana has been involved with the Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles series since the beginning. As character designer, Itahana was key in setting the tone of the original game and creating the distinct look of the different tribes, and he continued to design characters and supervise the art team for subsequent entries in the series. Itahana remains the character designer for The Crystal Bearers, and has also branched out to become its director. We recently had the chance to interview Itahana to learn more about this impressive game.

NINTENDO POWER This is your first time directing a Final Fantasy game, correct? What has that experience been like? What sort of surprising or unexpected things did you encounter during development?

TOSHIYUKI ITAHANA We have experts from various fields, including planning, programming, designing, and sound, all working together to make this title happen, and the experience of overseeing everything from a director's perspective has been very inspiring and filled with refreshing discoveries.

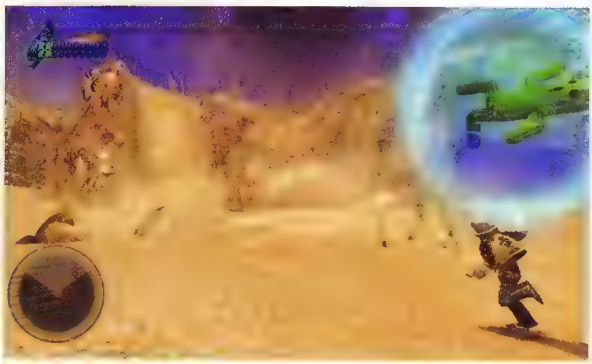
The planners and motion designers of each scene were given a lot of freedom in creating the actions of the characters, making for some very unique and interesting results. When I personally played some of these scenes for the first time, I was often surprised at the things that happened! These kinds of discoveries are what make this project so fun. Just a moment ago I was harvesting some crops, and saw a scarecrow turn a cow into steak meat for trampling the farm. Who would have seen that coming?

Why did you want to focus on a single-player experience for this game instead of a multiplayer experience as in past Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles games?

The multiplayer experience is not what defines the Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles series. Rather, Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles has always been the product of considering what kind of game could be crafted when Final Fantasy is approached as an action game.

With this project, we wanted to create a "tangible Final Fantasy," where players could experience the adventures of a unique hero firsthand, in a game world that grants them the freedom to act however they like. To realize this vision, we felt that placing the main character at the center of the screen would be most suitable, and thus decided to focus on the single-player experience. Even though this is a single-player game, knowing that one may not necessarily be alone in a room when playing, the game has a very inclusive design that allows others to jump right in and help out.

I understand that early in development you weren't planning to use motion controls, but then decided that was the way to go. Why did you decide it was important to include motion controls?



It wasn't that we made a sudden switch over to using motion controls, but once the game's specifications were confirmed, we felt it would be more fun if players could have a sense of unity with the main character, Layle. Exciting chocobo-riding chases are much more involving if you're waving your arms around instead of just using your fingertips.

Is the Wii MotionPlus accessory supported?

We did consider Wii MotionPlus, but ultimately decided not to use it. The controls of Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers are meant to be intuitive and do not require heightened sensitivity, so it plays just fine without Wii MotionPlus.

At one point during development, after no one had seen the game for a while, some media outlets claimed it was canceled. How did you feel about that?

Right around that time, I had locked myself in the development studio thinking, "Fans are waiting! We must show the game in playable form as soon as possible!" So when I first heard about the rumor I was very surprised. But by showing a playable demo at E3, I think we were really able to prove the rumor false, and am glad fans were able to see that the game is coming along.

One thing that's surprising is that Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers is not an RPG. What kind of game would you call it?

In a typical RPG, there is the acquiring of skill points or gathering of information that might not be considered inclusive activities for people watching the game being played. We didn't set off to create "something that isn't an RPG" with this title, but started by thinking about what it would be like to make a game in which players, whether they are actually playing or watching from the same living room, could have fun

together and also feel a sense of unity with a character that uses special powers. As a result, Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers became a game that departs from the typical RPG, in which players are given the power to decide what actions to take to advance in the story. They can enjoy the attractions available in each area, much like they would in an amusement park.

What do you think of the response the game got at E3?

The development team was encouraged after hearing that players had fun playing the game at E3. It was also a great opportunity to hear what people had to say about what to improve. I am also very thankful that fans and media received the game as well as they did, even though the system is very different from traditional Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles games.

What can you tell us about the variety of characters in the game?

There are characters that vary in personality and appearance, all with their own motivations. These diverse characters are brought together when an individual of the Yuke race, no longer supposed to exist in their world, suddenly appears, launching them into a complex web of events. As the story progresses, the motives that drive each of these characters become apparent, and through this process, I think that players will develop an attachment to some and learn to like them.

My personal favorite would have to be Layle, who lives by a very clear-cut set of personal rules.

I understand that one of the things the development team wanted to accomplish was to create cool, stylish action. Why was that important to you?

It was important because we wanted to create a thrilling action-adventure experience with familiar Final Fantasy elements. In a good action-adventure, the main character should be someone that players could look up to, and in a good action-adventure game, players have to be able to feel a sense of unity with this hero in action. So we have prepared many playable event scenes, among other things, in which a wide range of actions are possible.

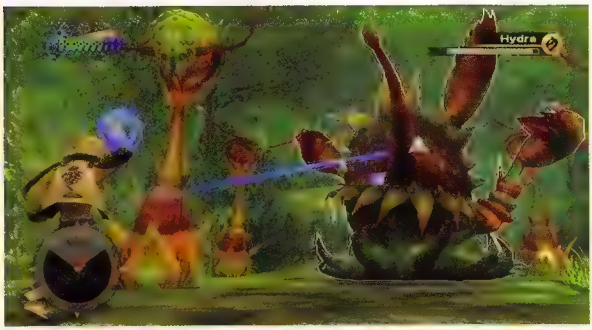
How did this emphasis on "cool action" affect other areas of the game, such as the story and visuals?

We were extra careful about things like making sure to include exciting and heroic highlight scenes at regular intervals in the scenario, and using the visual capabilities of the Wii [console] to its fullest potential. Even right now, and for as long as time permits, the development team will continue to pour their efforts into the presentation and sound for a final product that looks and feels great.

Obviously, the characters are more realistic than in past Crystal Chronicles games. Why did you go in that direction? What sort of general design rules did you follow to create the game's look?

We sat down and thought about what kind of characters would be most appropriate for an action-adventure with a scenario on the serious side, and decided to go with a realistic scale for the characters' size. Since the characters of the Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles series have always had miniature treatments, shorter in scale, it was definitely a big change for me and the development team.

Up until now, we had taken a lot of care to differentiate the silhouettes of each of the races—for example, the Yukes would be stretched tall and Lilties would be small and round—so that it would be easy for players to tell their characters apart during multiplayer sessions. However, this time all races live together, so while we were careful about differentiating silhouettes, we made sure that when they were all standing side by side there was a sense of consistency. We were careful to make the size of their heads similar, so that when Layle, a Clavat, and the Lilty princess turned toward each other, the princess's face would not seem too large. There is a heavy population of Lilties in this



game, and they tend to gather in groups, so in order to make sure their silhouettes remained consistent, we created large and small body types within the race, differentiating them while still maintaining a certain look.

Considering your usual approach to character designs, were there certain aspects you had to focus on differently than usual for this game?
In terms of taking a different approach, the fashion departed from the usual "western fantasy" theme, as my goal was to create outfits that I could see myself wearing. Also, I was careful not to make the outfits too urban, giving them a tougher look—something the characters could jump right into an adventure with. While designing the outfits, I visited the DIY section of hardware stores quite often for inspiration.

There's a lot of early-American influence in the aesthetics and music. What about that appeals to you?
The staff who are around my age and I grew up watching the exciting action-adventure Hollywood films that were released before we were even born. We felt that in order to portray this type of excitement and awe for a hero, looking to the visual and sound elements of those Hollywood films for inspiration would be effective.

When we played the game we experienced shooting, airship piloting, and throwing enemies during a chase scene. Do these same types of gameplay pop up again?
There are actions like shooting that can only be executed in specific scenes, but you can ride and run around on a chocobo or pick up and toss not only the monsters, but townspeople, whenever you like. The ability to control gravity through the crystal bearer, Layle, is the basis for all of the actions in this game.

It seems like you don't even need to engage in conversations with NPCs (except in cut-scenes). How did you arrive at that design choice?
We arrived at this design because we didn't want towns to be a place where NPCs would be set only to repeat the same things like a billboard. There are few opportunities for conversation, but each location in the game has a story behind it, so it is clear why the NPCs are there, and what they want you to do. There is not a single character that exists for no reason. Given this situation, players can interact with the NPCs by either helping them out or getting in their way.

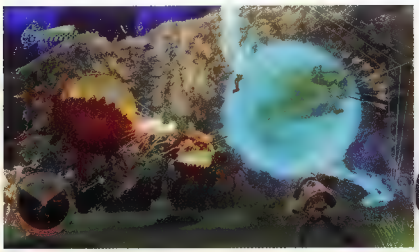
It's pretty unusual to have a hero that generally doesn't have any weapons. How does that change the approach to designing an action game?
One of the reasons for this design is that we did not want to create a violent game. In a game like this, where players can interact freely with even the town's people, it would be difficult to avoid a violent scene if the hero wields a weapon, so we wanted to give him a versatile power that could be used both in battle and as a means of communication. The playable event scenes are the place to enjoy action with weapons.

With all the changes when compared to other games in the series, why is this still a Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles game instead of having its own brand?
The theme behind all Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles titles is to create a Final Fantasy game with a different approach, so Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers, which originated with this idea in mind, is still a part of the series. It would be great if fans of both the Final Fantasy and Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles series enjoy this new approach that we are taking.

There are a lot of unique features that set Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers apart from other games. What aspects are you most proud of?
I'm most proud of the fact that we were able to create a single-player experience with a riveting plot comparable to a numbered Final Fantasy, which can be enjoyed by everyone even if they are a friend or family member just watching the player from the side.

What parts of the game do you think players will be most delighted or surprised by?
The variety of locations and the lively actions of the people and monsters that reside there should definitely add an element of surprise, and by playing in such an environment, I think that players will naturally become more cheerful. Some familiar Final Fantasy monsters will also be making appearances, at times as a boss-class enemy, so that's definitely something fans can look forward to.

Do you have any final message you'd like to give to the players that are looking forward to this game?
We're currently in the final stages of development. All the staff are constantly playing, making adjustments to make this game as fun as possible. I am surprised every day by the changes I notice in the actions of the people that live in the Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers world, or moved by the deep storyline. It would be the greatest joy for the entire development team to finally deliver this game to players so they can enjoy it with their friends and family. The day when you can adventure alongside Layle is getting closer! Please keep an eye out for Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers!



Celebrating Game Boy's 20th Anniversary!

BY SCOTT PELLAND

WE LOVE GAME BOY

We celebrate two decades of TV independence with a look back at the pea-green glory days of portable gaming.

TWENTY YEARS AGO, Nintendo introduced a handheld video game system with green-tinted LCD graphics, 8-bit processing power, a whimsical name, and a dream that the company could replicate its successful NES console in portable form. Today the Game Boy family is recognized as one of the most successful brands ever launched, having enjoyed unprecedented domination of its category in spite of a parade of technically advanced competitors. The Game Boy's devotees ranged from preschoolers to seasoned gamers to senior citizens. Evidence of the little handheld's impact on the video game world can be found everywhere—the Game Boy pioneered concepts such as connectivity, backward compatibility, nontraditional interfaces, and the importance of accessibility to both developers and gamers. The system wasn't about groundbreaking technology; it was about smart, efficient design. But it isn't the technology or the design that we recall with fondness; it's the experiences. The power of the Game Boy was that it was both personal and public; it was with you at home and on the road. You were quite visibly a gamer wherever you were, and that gave you a connection to anyone else who had a Game Boy. From the original Game Boy to the Game Boy Advance SP, the Game Boy family was Nintendo's ambassador to the world.

WHY WE LOVE GAME BOY

Nintendo on the Go

The Game Boy may have been small, but since its buttons were patterned after those on an NES controller, the system delivered a complete, instantly recognizable Nintendo experience. Additionally, the handheld's game library was just as robust as that of a home console. A number of top-tier NES (and later, Super NES) franchises made their way to the Game Boy, including Mario, Donkey Kong, and Metroid. Especially cool was that those titles generally weren't mere ports of games we'd already played on our TVs; they offered all-new adventures that breathed additional life into our favorite series.

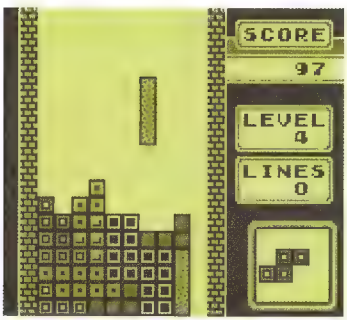
Built to Last

Whether you dropped a Game Boy or played it for hours on end, the good times kept on rolling. The system was built like a brick. Years ago, a soldier on duty overseas sent Nintendo's service department his all-but-destroyed Game Boy, which had been pulled from the wreckage following an explosion. Out of curiosity, a Nintendo tech connected the blob to a power source, and to his surprise he heard the distinctive bleeps of a game. The Game Boy's screen was completely toasted, but when the tech installed a new one, it worked!

The little handheld was also admirable for its lower power consumption—a key factor when it comes to portable electronics. Just ask anyone who has run out of juice halfway through a flight or at a critical moment of a game. The Game Boy's color-screen competitors sucked batteries dry—which was one of the reasons players turned to the Game Boy in spite of its monochromatic view of the world. In a way, the Game Boy's energy-efficient pea-soup LCD screen made it the original green machine!

THE RETURN OF KID ICARUS

Nintendo often seemed more willing to experiment with Game Boy releases than with home-console titles, and gave a number of old favorites, foreign releases, and niche games a second shot at stardom. Along those lines, the handheld's library included Kid Icarus: Of Myths and Monsters, which remains the only sequel to the much-loved NES vertical-scrolling platformer. For that, Game Boy, we salute you.



The Ultimate Portable Game

If any single game can be credited with driving the Game Boy's early success, it is Tetris, which, incidentally, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. The incredibly addictive puzzle game created by Russian mathematician and programmer Alexey Pajitnov (see Power Profiles in Vol. 239) was the perfect match for Nintendo's handheld. It was graphically simple, so the Game Boy's monochromatic display was no detriment to the experience, and a puzzle game was the perfect short-burst diversion while people were out and about. The story behind Nintendo's acquisition of Tetris is one of the most fascinating in the gaming industry; in David Sheff's *Game Over: How Nintendo Conquered the World* (Vintage, 1994) it reads like something out of a spy novel. The inclusion of Tetris with the original Game Boy made the system a must-have for millions. Tetris made the handheld relevant to everybody, not just hardcore Nintendo fans, and that set up Game Boy's incredible success.

Connecting The World

Today we connect our phones, video game systems, computers, and TVs at home and on the go with hardly a thought, but in the '80s trying to get two devices to communicate with each other was the stuff of nightmares. The Game Boy bravely blazed the trail, demonstrating that connectivity could be both easy and powerful. Video Link Cables (later known as Game Link Cables) were a part of the mix from the get-go, and numerous titles employed them for two-player co-op and competitive matches provided that the players had two Game Boy systems and two copies of the same game. By daisy-chaining systems, it was even possible to link as many as 16 of them together, although only one title—Faceball 2000—ever implemented the trick.

At the dawn of the 21st century, with the introduction of the Game Boy Advance and the Nintendo GameCube, a second level of connectivity was touted by Nintendo (linking GBA to GameCube) as the next big thing. The concept was cool; players would use the GBA as a GameCube controller, using the GBA's screen to display private information. Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles was the best implementation of the concept, but connecting so many systems with individual cables proved a bit too messy. The fulfillment of this idea would have to wait for Wi-Fi connectivity.

Lost Time Reclaimed

Before handheld electronics filled our pockets, our daily existence was plagued with an inconvenient time-wasting phenomenon called *waiting*. Waiting involved the forced necessity of doing nothing. You sat waiting for your dentist appointment. You waited for a bus to arrive. You waited for your cheeseburger to be cooked. You waited for a plane to land. You sat on the toilet and waited for nature to answer its call. Dozens of minutes each day were lost to the scourge of waiting. People attempted to fill the time by twiddling their thumbs, humming, reading magazines (which was OK if there was a Nintendo Power issue close by), staring blankly into space, or squirming uncomfortably. The Game Boy turned those minutes into times you actually looked forward to. Downtime became fun time. A trip to the bathroom became a chance to increase your score. Thanks to Game Boy, humanity could be happy and productive.

Games, Games, Games!

Players weren't the only ones who loved Game Boy—publishers did, too. Pretty much every noteworthy third-party publisher of the day—from Square to Capcom to Konami to Acclaim to Sunsoft—supported the system, which meant that the biggest third-party brands were available to gamers on the go. The Game Boy's limitations meant developers had to be clever and efficient, but the system's technical restrictions also resulted in shorter game-development cycles and lower costs than creating home-console games. The amount of third-party support for any system is considered a key measure of its success, and the Game Boy hosted virtually every major franchise, including Mega Man, Double Dragon, Ninja Gaiden, Final Fantasy, Castlevania, and Grand Theft Auto.

Game Boy Vitals

LAUNCH July 31, 1989

SYSTEMS SOLD
120 million worldwide

GAMES SOLD
500 million worldwide

CPU Custom 8-bit processor running at 4.19 MHz

DISPLAY 4 shades; 160 × 144 pixels

DIMENSIONS
3.5" (w) x 5.8" (h) x 1.3" (d)

It Kept Getting Better

There was a time not so long ago when bigger was almost always considered better: consider the Hummer, supersized servings, and big hair. Thank goodness that Game Boy came along to help reverse that trend; as new versions of the portable system were released they became smaller, lighter, and yet more powerful, often boasting added features. Because the Game Boy kept evolving, the platform stayed relevant and enormously successful for well over a decade.

GAME & WATCH • 1980
Predating Game Boy by almost a decade, Nintendo's original handhelds—the Game & Watch line—each featured a different game that was played on a single LCD screen. The collection featured basic versions of popular Nintendo arcade hits like Donkey Kong, and later included NES heroes Mario and Link. Most notably, Game & Watch introduced the Directional Pad and A and B Buttons that would be passed on to every Nintendo console and handheld that followed.

GAME BOY • 1989

Unlike Game & Watch, Game Boy wasn't limited to just one game or a single game screen and could handle the same kinds of titles as the then state-of-the-art NES.

SUPER GAME BOY • 1994
This nifty peripheral allowed players to experience Game Boy titles on their Super NES, with changeable color palettes.

GAME BOY POCKET • 1996
Portable gaming took a big step forward with this slim redesign of the original Game Boy, which was much easier to carry around.

GAME BOY LIGHT • 1997 (JAPAN ONLY)
This enhanced Game Boy Pocket was the first Nintendo handheld to include a lit screen, but it was never released in North America.

GAME BOY COLOR • 1998

In addition to delivering more than 32,000 colors, Game Boy Color had a bit more power under the hood and included an infrared wireless communication feature, although that innovation was ahead of its time and few titles made use of it. Perhaps the best feature of GBC was that it could colorize old black-and-white Game Boy games with four-color palettes. Backward compatibility became a major selling point in future hardware upgrades such as Game Boy Advance and Nintendo DS.

GAME BOY ADVANCE • 2001

As much as we loved the original Game Boy, Game Boy Pocket, and Game Boy Color, by the time that the millennial clock had ticked over, Game Boy's 8-bit CPU was getting a bit long in the tooth. It was time to move forward into the age of Game Boy Advance. Bringing 32-bit power to the next-gen Game Boy meant that on-the-go gaming could step up to more sophisticated graphics and gameplay. GBA paved the way for new franchises such as Advance Wars and Golden Sun while providing the technical power to bring Super NES and even some N64 titles to the portable platform.

GAME BOY ADVANCE SP • 2003
The Game Boy SP is the last major entry in the line, and also the best thanks to a fully lit screen, durable clamshell construction, and a sleek design upgrade. It was also the last handheld that was backward-compatible with all previous Game Boy games.

GAME BOY PLAYER • 2003
Similar to the Super Game Boy, the Game Boy Player allowed Game Boy, Game Boy Color, and Game Boy Advance titles to work on a Nintendo GameCube.

GAME BOY MICRO • 2005
Micro is the smallest handheld Nintendo has ever produced, and it was also the last to bear the Game Boy name. It was so tiny that you had to be careful not to mistake it for a candy bar. They weren't very tasty, however, which may have been what limited the Micro's overall sales.

NINTENDO DS • 2004
Originally positioned as an additional platform to the tried-and-true Game Boy-plus-home-console strategy, the Nintendo DS system was such a massive success that it became Nintendo's de facto handheld and effectively ended the Game Boy brand. Game Boy's legacy, however, lives on in the many features it debuted that can still be found in the DS.

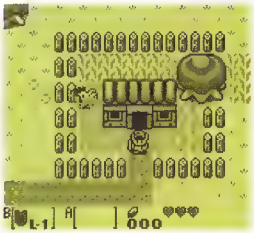
SMILE, YOU'RE ON GAME BOY CAMERA

Introduced in 1998, Game Boy Camera (along with the companion Game Boy Printer) was a creative tool that proved to be far more flexible than one might think from a cursory glance at the grainy, four-shade digital photos it snapped. A number of simple games were included with the accessory, but the real fun was in the editing suite; users could decorate photos with stamps featuring Nintendo characters and themes, stitch together still frames to make video sequences, and add sound and music to their productions with a remarkably versatile sound editor. All of this creative goodness came from Game Freak, the developer responsible for Pokémon. Keep in mind that this product came out more than a decade before similar features were reintroduced for the Nintendo DSi handheld.

The Game Boy line proved to be a testing ground for other experimental hardware ideas, such as motion control and rumble (as used in Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble and Pokémon Pinball respectively, both for GBC).

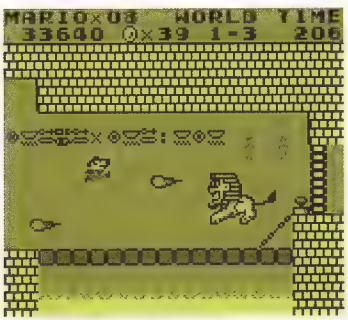
The Home of Pokémon

Tetris may have driven the Game Boy's initial success, but a different game series can be credited with the system's incredible staying power. The personal nature of Pokémon, in which players catch, train, and battle their Pokémon, was perfectly suited to the Game Boy. Pokémon is also a social game in which Trainers can trade Pokémon and go head-to-head with their teams, and Game Boy accommodated that via Game Link Cables. As the exclusive home of Pokémon video games for much of the franchise's existence, the Game Boy became the system of choice for an entire generation of gamers.



One of the Best Zeldas Ever

The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening didn't just provide a complete Zelda game on a handheld system; it turned out to be one of the best Zelda games on any system. The graphics were nearly as good as those of Zelda on Super NES, and the script (penned by former NP writer Dan Owsen) was extremely entertaining; the story, meanwhile, carried a surprise twist and a haunting echo of sadness. The result was an immensely playable adventure that delivered everything you'd want from a Zelda game, and then some. Link's Awakening was so good that a color-enhanced version was released for the Game Boy Color. The GBC also received its own excellent Zelda games, Oracle of Ages and Oracle of Seasons. Both Oracle titles were spectacular in their own right, and they boasted a unique password system that let you carry save data from one game to the other.



Mario's Strangest Adventure

Given the incredible popularity of Mario, an all-new Game Boy title starring the heroic plumber was a no-brainer. Nintendo delivered right out of the gate with Super Mario Land, and although the core gameplay stayed true to the Mario platformers we knew and loved, we never imagined that in other respects the game would be so...strange. Instead of taking place in the Mushroom Kingdom, the game was set in the bizarre Polynesian/Egyptian world of Sarasaland. There was no Bowser or Peach—Mario had to rescue Princess Daisy from an alien named Tatanga. And those weren't the only odd things about this game. There were Koopa Troopas with bombs where their shells should be, flowers that granted the ability to toss rubber balls at odd angles, and stages where Mario piloted an airplane or a submarine. Later Mario titles for the Game Boy (Super Mario Land 2: 6 Golden Coins and the GBC-exclusive Super Mario Bros. Deluxe) would stick closer to the series' roots, but the original Super Mario Land holds a special place in our hearts for being Mario's first full-fledged portable game—and arguably his most bizarre outing ever.

Self-Expression

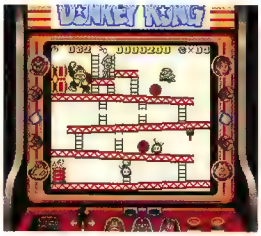
In 1995 Nintendo introduced Game Boys with colored cases: red, blue, green, yellow, black, and white. There was even a transparent case that revealed the inner components of Game Boy. The color you chose made a statement about you and your style. Subsequent versions of the Game Boy and Game Boy Advance were released in a variety of colors; special limited-edition versions, such as a golden Game Boy Advance SP emblazoned with a Triforce in commemoration of the release of The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap, were the pinnacle of gaming style.

KIRBY OUR ENTHUSIASM

We love Kirby. We love him because he brought a new and engaging style of play to Game Boy. We love his unabashed pinkness. We love his insatiable appetite and his signature ability to use moves he adopts from enemies. Kirby was created for the Game Boy platform by none other than Masahiro Sakurai—the creator of Super Smash Bros. (so it's no surprise that the pink puffball has appeared in that series, as well). Our versatile hero introduced millions of young gamers to video games, teaching them the basics of platform action and exploration. In fact, Kirby helped the Game Boy become the entry point for many first-time gamers.

The Game Boy introduced us to many additional characters and series that went on to have huge success, such as Wario and Wave Race.

Going Super



Playing great games on the go was the Game Boy's claim to fame, but sometimes there's nothing like playing a game on a big ol' screen with a controller in your hand. The Super Game Boy, a peripheral for the Super NES, let you do just that: play Game Boy games on a TV. When portability wasn't a concern, the Super Game Boy was *the* way to play the excellent Game Boy library. Beyond the obvious benefits of playing games on a monitor, the Super Game Boy was chock-full of cool innovations: you could assign colors to the Game Boy's four shades of green, and, since the gameplay didn't fill the entire screen, you could select from a variety of borders or even draw your own. Several games, such as Mega Man V and the 1994 update to Donkey Kong, were marked as Super Game Boy-enhanced and had custom borders and broader color palettes when played on the Super Game Boy; other titles featured additional sounds, visual effects, or gameplay modes. Though never released in North America, a Super Game Boy 2 followed, featuring Game Boy Color compatibility. More recently, the Game Boy Player for GameCube allowed players to enjoy Game Boy (as well as GBC and GBA) games on the big screen.

A Pillar Of Strength

It wasn't long ago that short-sighted pundits in the gaming industry had all but written off Nintendo as a maker of video game consoles. Today Nintendo systems dominate both the handheld and home-console markets. Many experts might not have considered the vital role the Game Boy played for Nintendo. While the GameCube struggled in the home-console wars, the Game Boy and Game Boy Advance owned the handheld market. The continuing success of the Game Boy line provided the resources and even some of the creative spark for Nintendo to push into the new frontier of gaming with innovative interfaces. Both Nintendo DS and Wii owe much to Game Boy's long reign—it was a smart little system that ruled the world.

Our Favorite Game Boy Games

SCOTT PELLAND

Most of my five top picks for Game Boy and GBC were giant releases for the pint-sized platform, but I chose them because they were all so hard to put down. These are some of my favorite video games of all-time!

1. Tetris
2. The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening
3. Metroid II: The Return of Samus
4. Pokémon Blue and Red Versions
5. Final Fantasy Adventure

CHRIS SLATE

Tetris DX was my favorite handheld game for years. The 1994 revamp of Donkey Kong is puzzling/platforming nirvana, and Kid Icarus was much improved on the small screen.

1. Tetris DX
2. Donkey Kong
3. The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX
4. Super Mario Land 2: 6 Golden Coins
5. Kid Icarus: Of Myths and Monsters

CHRIS HOFFMAN

I must have played through Link's Awakening a dozen times, but no matter how many times I explored Koholint Island, it never got old. TMNT: Fall of the Foot Clan, which regularly ranked near the top of NP readers' polls in the early '90s, also deserves a special shout-out.

1. The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX
2. Metal Gear Solid
3. The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons
4. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Fall of the Foot Clan
5. Mega Man V

JUSTIN CHENG

I used to play the original Game Boy version of Tetris whenever I had a spare moment. I also have a special place in my heart for Super Mario Land and Ninja Gaiden Shadow. Sure, neither of them is the best iteration in their respective series, but I remember thinking how awesome it was to play both on the go.

1. Tetris
2. The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening
3. Super Mario Land 2: 6 Golden Coins
4. Super Mario Land
5. Ninja Gaiden Shadow

SEE HOW COMICSBLIPS BRINGS YOU THE LATEST INSIDER NEWS AND RUMORS:
WWW.COMICSBLIPS.COM/DEMO

comics
WWW.COMICSBLIPS.COM blips

GET ON THE INSIDE
Immerse yourself in the personalities and back-stories behind your favorite characters.

DEEPER COMICS COVERAGE
Get one-stop access to the hottest stories from all the best comics sites, large & small.

SHARE, CONNECT, DISCUSS
Expand your knowledge and make friends in a community of comics fanatics like you.

COMICSBLIPS.COM
COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INSIGHTS, NEWS AND RUMORS.

THINK OUTSIDE the BOX

Don your thinking cap—or perhaps your top hat—and set out on another puzzle-filled DS adventure. Prepare yourself for what lies within **Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box**.

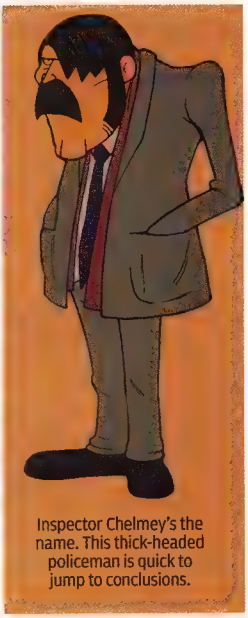
BY CHRIS HOFFMAN

A true gentleman is never one to rest on his laurels. That's why Professor Hershel Layton and his young assistant Luke, after having overcome the hazards and secrets of the town of St. Mystere in last year's Professor Layton and the Curious Village, are embarking on another mysterious quest this August in Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box. Published by Nintendo and developed by Level-5, it retains the same structure and puzzle-packed gameplay as its award-winning predecessor (the original was Nintendo Power's Puzzle Game of the Year for 2008), but the riddles run deeper, the challenges are fresher, and the stakes may be no less than life and death themselves.

The story of the Diabolical Box begins when Layton, professor of archeology at Great Britain's Gressenheller University and a self-styled detective, receives a letter from his friend and mentor, Dr. Andrew Schrader. In his letter, Dr. Schrader explains that he has long been in pursuit of a strange artifact known as the Elysian Box, which reportedly kills anyone who attempts to open it. After many years of searching, Dr. Schrader has finally obtained the Elysian Box, and he plans to put an unspecified theory about the item to the test. The letter raises an unsettling feeling in the professor—whose intuition is usually correct—and so he and Luke race to the doctor's apartment.

Unfortunately, they arrive too late; Dr. Schrader has died from unidentifiable causes, and the Elysian Box is nowhere to be found. The only clue on the scene is a train ticket for the luxurious Molentary Express—a ticket, strangely enough, that lacks any destination. With the police ready to write off the doctor's death as due to natural causes, Professor Layton takes it upon himself to ride the train across the early-20th-century English countryside in hopes of finding clues to the whereabouts of the Elysian Box and the truth behind Dr. Schrader's death.

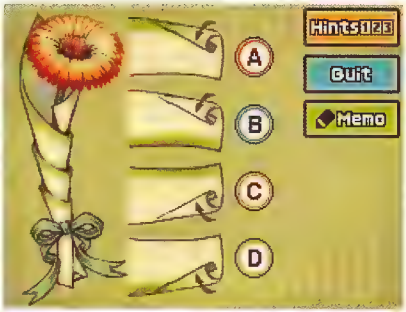
Get ready for all manner of perplexing puzzles.



Inspector Chelmey's the name. This thick-headed policeman is quick to jump to conclusions.

PLATFORM NINTENDO DS | PUBLISHER NINTENDO | DEVELOPER LEVEL-5 | RELEASE AUGUST 2009

There's no puzzle too tough, no mystery too big, for the famous Professor Layton.



[Below] Professor Layton would evidently make a fine Mouseketeer.

GOING MENTAL

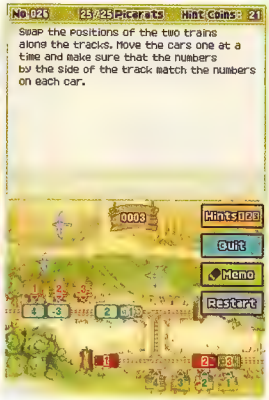
The gameplay that unfolds as the professor and Luke go about their mission will be, for the most part, instantly familiar to anyone who's played Curious Village. The game is equal parts point-and-click adventuring and brain-bending puzzle solving, held together by a unique setting, memorable characters, and a charmingly distinct aesthetic evocative of animated films by Hayao Miyazaki's acclaimed Studio Ghibli.

The touch-driven interface is perfectly suited to the Nintendo DS system. You simply tap whatever you see on the touch screen to investigate your surroundings or talk to a nonplayable character, and by tapping a shoe icon in the lower-right corner of the screen, you can move to various places in the environment. People you talk to or things you see may provide clues about where to go or what to do next, or they may simply yield another mystery.

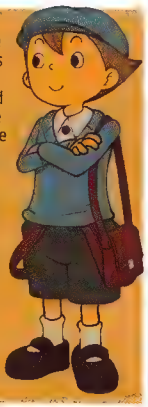
Of course, what you're most likely to encounter as you're exploring the Molentary Express and talking to its passengers are puzzles, and lots of them. Puzzles are the heart and soul of the game, and any excuse to solve a puzzle is a good one. Some of them are critical to progress the story (such as finding a way to open a locked door), while others are mentioned to you by NPCs (either for fun or because a character has a problem he or she needs solved), and even more pop up because the professor or Luke sees something that reminds him of a brain-teaser he once heard.

Puzzles come in almost every form imaginable, but all of them will test your gray matter. Some are jigsaw-style puzzles where you must place pieces correctly; some are logic puzzles; some rely on spatial reasoning; some

[Right] Puzzles such as this one let you move pieces with the stylus.


No 026
23/25 Picarats
Hint Coins: 21
Swap the positions of the two trains along the tracks. Move the cars one at a time and make sure that the numbers by the side of the track match the numbers on each car.
0003
Hints 023
Quit
Memo
Restart

Luke is the professor's self-proclaimed apprentice and a puzzle fan in his own right.

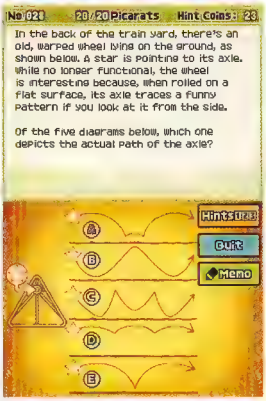


[Above] You'll find fine food in the Molentary Express's luxuriant dining car, and it also serves up a puzzle or two.

are grounded in basic principals of geometry or algebra; some are pure riddles. In the Tiled Box puzzle, for example, you're shown a cube from two angles, then tasked with figuring out how the pattern on it would look if the cube were unfolded. In the Trees in the Forest puzzle, you're given a grid consisting of 16 trees of four different types, and you must divide the grid so each section contains one of each type of tree. And in The Warped Wheel, you must figure out how an oddly shaped wheel would roll down the road.

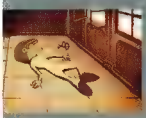
You'll use the touch screen in a wide variety of ways, as well. Sometimes you'll physically move and rotate objects, while other times you'll draw lines, circle points of interest, select answers from a multiple-choice list, or input words or numbers that are identified via handwriting recognition. With more than 150 puzzles in the game, you're guaranteed plenty of variety, as well as plenty of challenge. But don't worry if you get stumped—there are Hint Coins hidden in nearly every nook and cranny of the environments (in light fixtures, on doorknobs, under rugs, beneath pots, in chimneys, etc.), and you can spend them to get up to three tips per puzzle. The better you perform on each puzzle, the more points (called

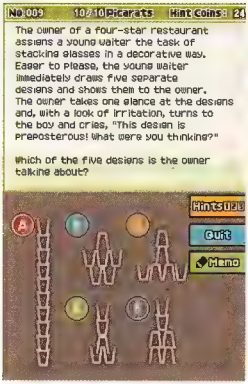
[Above] Minigames, including reassembling the pieces of a busted camera and helping a morbidly obese hamster get back into shape—which, very possibly, is a video game first—are available for your enjoyment.

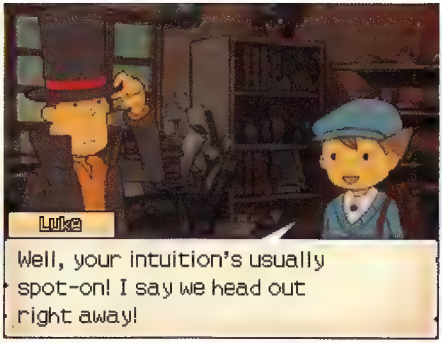

No 028
20/20 Picarats
Hint Coins: 23
In the back of the train yard, there's an old, warped wheel lying on the ground, as shown below. A star is painted to its axle. While no longer functional, the wheel is interesting because, when rolled on a flat surface, its axle traces a funny pattern if you look at it from the side.
Of the five diagrams below, which one depicts the actual path of the axle?
A
B
C
D
E
Hint Coins
Quit
Memo

The Story So Far

the Golden Apple, which is the key to receiving the




No.009
10/10 Picarats
Hint Coins: 24
The owner of a four-star restaurant assigns a young waiter the task of stacking glasses in a decorative way. Eager to please, the young waiter immediately draws five separate designs and shows them to the owner. The owner takes one glance at the designs and, with a look of irritation, turns to the boy and cries, "This design is preposterous! What were you thinking?"
Which of the five designs is the owner talking about?
Hints (2)
Quit
Memo



Flora met the professor on his previous adventure. Now she joins him on his current quest.

[Left] Mr. Beluga is as rich as he is suspicious and size-challenged.

Picarats) you'll earn, which lets you obtain unlockable goodies, not to mention bragging rights.

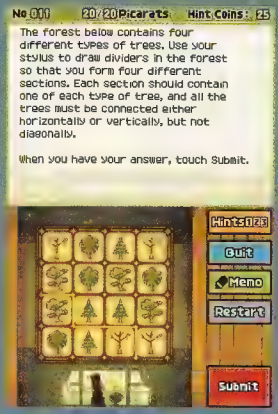
ALL ABOARD!

As Professor Layton and Luke continue their quest, they meet a bevy of interesting characters and visit a variety of intriguing locations. Some of the faces they encounter are straight from the first Professor Layton game; Flora, the girl who Layton and Luke met in St. Mystere, turns out to be riding the Molentary Express in the suite right next to that of our heroes, and mustachioed Inspector Chelmey happens to be the detective assigned to solving the case of Dr. Schrader's death. Though it's the real Inspector Chelmey this time (Luke makes sure by trying to yank off his face), it turns out that he's just as belligerent and boorish as the false one from Curious Village.

There are a number of new characters, too, many of whom seem to be hiding some sort of secret. Mr. Beluga (the wealthy, bossy, elitist owner of the Molentary Express) is looking for something with the help of his rock-star-wannabe nephew, but he won't say what it is. Katia Anderson, the daughter of a respected family from the village of Dropstone (where the Molentary Express stops when it needs some minor repairs), is running away from home, but no one knows why. And Katia's father and grandmother-in-law seem to have ties to the Elysian Box. In fact, the entire village of Dropstone appears to have some peculiar relationship to the Molentary Express and thus Dr. Schrader's demise. Even stranger are rumors of the "phantom village" of Folsense, which isn't on any map and can be reached only by riding the Molentary Express. One enigma quickly begets another; luckily, the professor keeps a running log of the game's 10 biggest mysteries in his trunk so you can stay abreast of the situation and ponder the game's complexities at any time.

Anatomy of a Puzzle

Your wits are your most important tool for solving the puzzles of Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box, but they aren't your only tool. Here's what else you'll have at your disposal when tackling the game's puzzles.


No.011
20/20 Picarats
Hint Coins: 25
The forest below contains four different types of trees. Use your stylus to draw dividers in the forest so that you form four different sections. Each section should contain one of each type of tree, and all the trees must be connected either horizontally or vertically, but not diagonally.
When you have your answer, touch Submit.
Hints (2)
Quit
Memo
Restart
Submit

PICARATS: This is essentially your score for the puzzle. Each time you fail and retry a given puzzle, the number of Picarats you can earn for that puzzle decreases. Picarats help you earn unlockable goodies.

NUMBER: This helps you keep track of which puzzles you've found. There are more than 150 in all!

HINTS AND HINT COINS: There are three hints for each puzzle, which you can purchase using Hint Coins. Hint Coins are limited, but you can find more by exploring your surroundings. Using Hint Coins does not decrease your Picarats earned.

Can't solve the puzzle no matter what? Most puzzles aren't mandatory, so if you're really stumped you can just quit for now, move on to something else, and try again later.

MEMO: At any time you can tap the memo button to call up a notepad overlay, which lets you use the touch screen to jot down any pertinent notes and still see the puzzle underneath.

RESTART: If you've screwed a puzzle up beyond all recognition, just hit Restart to try again from scratch.

Speaking of Professor Layton's baggage, it does more than house his personal effects. By clicking on the trunk icon in the upper-right corner of the touch screen, you can read up on case notes, replay previously solved puzzles, and save your game. More excitingly, the trunk houses several minigames that you unlock during the course of the adventure. After you obtain a rather obese hamster from the Express's chef, you can play a game in which you place objects around the hamster's home in order to make him exercise. A tea-set minigame challenges you to create different types of tea from eight ingredients and then serve it according to customer requests. There's also a camera minigame that comes in two parts; first you must find the components of a camera and reassemble them like a jigsaw puzzle, then with the rebuilt camera you can take pictures at certain spots, allowing you to identify differences between the photo and the "real" location. (Why don't they match? Got us.)

As you can tell, there's a lot to do in Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box. As sharp-minded players of Layton's first game doubtlessly remember, you can even swap passwords between Diabolical Box and Curious Village to unlock supersecret content—just one more reason why the professor's latest adventure promises to be one of the most engrossing games to hit DS this year. So get your tickets and head to your platform; the Molentary Express leaves soon, and the destination is unquestionably going to be loaded with mystery, drama, and fun.

Words of Wisdom

No matter the situation, Professor Layton is always ready with a response, be it some thoughtful insight or gentlemanly advice. He wouldn't be quite so eloquent, however, if it weren't for the fine folks in Nintendo of America's localization department (known internally as the Treehouse). We checked in with the game's localization writers, Ann Lin and Julian Chunovic, to find out what's involved in bringing the good professor to North America.

NINTENDO POWER What makes localizing the Professor Layton games different from other localization projects?

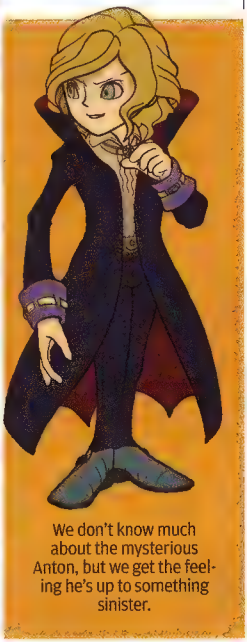
JULIAN CHUNOVIC Beyond simple translation of text, there are a lot of factors to consider in making sure North America's version of the Layton series is as enjoyable as its Japanese counterpart. Particularly, localizing puzzles is a real task, as the content and theme of a puzzle don't always transfer over in translation. Administering changes to the wording, graphic elements, and, occasionally, concepts of these puzzles to make them satisfying and understandable for a North American audience is a fairly unusual task in the realm of game localization.

ANN LIN Besides screening, changing, and replacing puzzles, as Julian mentioned, we also user-test all puzzles to make sure that the descriptions, hints, and graphics are as clear as possible. In addition to puzzle work, there's also a significant amount of voiced movies and dialogue, which is pretty rare for a DS title. We write the voice scripts, cast actors, and direct the actors in the recording studio.

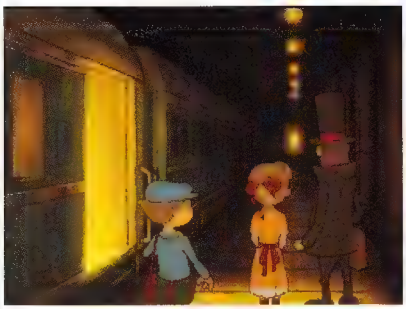
Did you work on the first Professor Layton as well? How did that makes things easier for working on Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box?

LIN Yes, we both worked on the first Professor Layton. Diabolical Box is bigger than its predecessor, but we were able to take what we learned last time and apply it to this title.

CHUNOVIC Working on the first Professor Layton game meant we were already on good terms with the developer and familiar with



We don't know much about the mysterious Anton, but we get the feeling he's up to something sinister.



[Right] The game conveniently keeps track of every major mystery you encounter.

the pitfalls of localizing the series. Using what we learned last time, we were able to really refine our methods and build off of the familiar characters and personalities we established in the localized version of the first game. I often didn't even need to ask myself, "What would Layton say here?" It would just come naturally when I saw the Japanese.

What would you say sets Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box apart from the previous Professor Layton title?

CHUNOVIC Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box is basically a whole lot more of a good thing. The game throws Layton and Luke into a completely new adventure, but also goes on to provide more of the content players, myself included, go wild for. It has more puzzles and nearly triple the voice work and animation of the previous game. Level-5 even made some great tweaks to the game interface, like the new memo function.

How would you describe the game's tone, and what's the secret to successfully maintaining that tone?

LIN If I were to describe the Layton series in one word, it would be "charming." A lot of this charm comes from a story that's intriguing but also pretty goofy at times. Above all, we try to keep things lighthearted and approachable.

Who is your favorite character to write?

LIN For me, one of the best things about working on the Layton series is the huge variety of characters, all with their own distinctive voices and set of quirks. Though the main characters are fun to write, it's the minor characters where I can really let loose. One of my favorites is Pavel, the lost tourist who speaks in this confused jumble of phrases he's picked up from his world travels. He makes a cameo appearance in this title, so keep your eyes peeled for the little guy in a pith helmet.

What are the key elements of Professor Layton's and Luke's personalities?

LIN Layton is one of those people who has a deep intellectual curiosity about everything, but not in an annoying way. He's not a know-it-all; he just loves learning and teaching, and he tends to see learning opportunities everywhere. Luke shares Layton's inquisitiveness, but his youthful enthusiasm might come across as grating to someone without the professor's infinite patience.

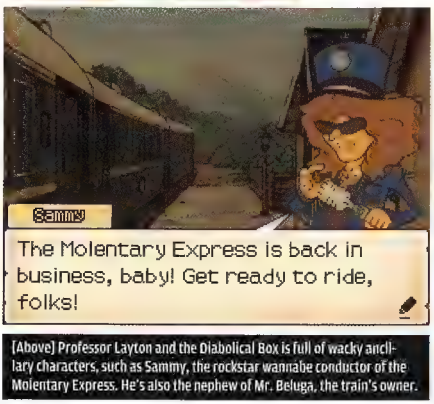
In some games you have to worry about just localizing text, but I imagine there was a lot more to Professor Layton. What all did the process encompass?

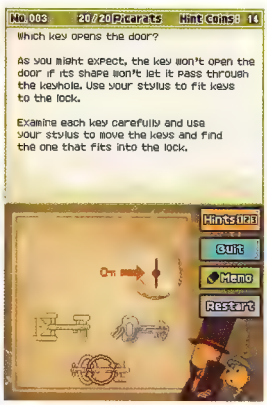
CHUNOVIC As I touched on, getting the puzzles right for North America was key in making the experience of playing the game an enjoyable one.

In localizing puzzle content, we first had to comb through all of the game's content and make sure each puzzle would work in English. Several puzzles hinged on elements or wording unique to the Japanese language and would be unplayable if directly translated, so we worked with Level-5 to find suitable replacements when possible. Additionally, some puzzles worked in English, but lost some of their clever nuances in translation. The Japanese language is wonderful for talking around subjects without referring to them directly, which allows for some very subtle wordplay-based puzzles that are hard to replicate in English. For these types of puzzles, Ann and I would do our best to find good English equivalents so that the English version of each puzzle was as much fun as the Japanese. Sometimes we'd need to make changes to the puzzle's graphics or wording to make these changes really stick.

Then, once the puzzles were ready to go, we organized a special testing pool where we had 100 people play through the puzzles of the game and leave feedback about each puzzle. This helped us refine wording, eliminate potential multiple solutions, and ensure

Poor Dr. Schrader. Even his bushy beard couldn't save him from the curse of the Elysian Box.




No.003
20/20 Picarats
Hint Coins: 14
Which key opens the door?
As you might expect, the key won't open the door if its shape won't let it pass through the keyhole. Use your stylus to fit keys to the lock.
Examine each key carefully and use your stylus to move the keys and find the one that fits into the lock.
Hints (23)
Quit
Memo
Restart

[Above] Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box is full of wacky ancillary characters, such as Sammy, the rockstar wannabe conductor of the Molentary Express. He's also the nephew of Mr. Beluga, the train's owner.

that a wide range of users could have fun with the localized puzzles.

What is the most challenging part of localizing the game?

CHUNOVIC For me it was probably translating all the puzzles. There are so many of them! Japanese is really flexible in its structure and can convey a lot of information in a single sentence. Translating those sentences directly would often result in longwinded and perplexing English. Resequencing and reorganizing the text into proper, concise English was a beast of a task.

LIN I agree with Julian that reworking the puzzles was a huge challenge. In order to provide the clearest instructions possible, our first step was solving the puzzles ourselves without looking at the answers. As Layton fans know, some of those puzzles can be pretty brutal (especially Layton's Challenges—whew!). On any given day in the Treehouse, you might see me and Julian drawing confusing diagrams, building models out of paper and tape, and even pushing each other around on desk chairs to visualize a puzzle. I'm sure we looked insane.

Even so, I'd say that the most challenging part of this project for me was just the game's scope. Most games might require voice recording or user testing or more technical writing, but we usually don't handle titles that incorporate all of these elements at once.

How involved are you with the voice-recording sessions? Are Christopher Miller and Lani Minella reprising their roles of Professor Layton and Luke?

LIN Yes, we're involved in every step of the voice-recording process. Here's how it works. First, we get the voice script from Level-5, and Julian translates it. Then I rewrite it to make sure that characterization and story are consistent. For dialogue that appears in movies, I write the lines so they fit the character's on-screen mouth movements. We call this "synched dialogue." This kind of writing can be tricky because conveying the same information in English takes more syllables than it does in Japanese. Plus, synched dialogue needs to account for timing as well as for different sounds. If a character looks like he's saying "ah," I can't have him saying "oooh." We also smooth out synch issues in the studio with the actor, oftentimes rewriting on the fly to match mouth movements better.

[Above] For Professor Layton, there's never a bad time for a tea-brewing minigame.

While the writing process is taking place, we're also usually working on casting the new characters. There are quite a few new characters this time around, so I spent a lot of time thinking about how they should sound and writing audition scripts that would accurately encapsulate their personalities.

Both Chris and Lani are returning, which I'm very excited about. They are both pros, and it's always a pleasure to work with them. One thing that always amazes me about actors as talented as these two is their ability to add meaning to a line in ways I hadn't imagined. A well-placed breath or a pause or a change in pitch can really add nuance to a character that would be missing if it were just text onscreen.

The Layton series is superpopular in Japan, and Level-5 is a very respected developer/publisher. What's it been like working with them?

CHUNOVIC Anyone who's played a Level-5 title knows they really know their stuff when it comes to games. It's been a real joy working with a developer with so many great ideas and such a keen eye for design. Ann and I have had the privilege of working directly with Level-5 during localization for both games, and at first there was a lot of back-and-forth because we were pretty active in making requests to help change and improve the North American versions of the games. But over the months, I think we really came to see eye-to-eye on localization issues. Thanks to their understanding, we've been able to make some pretty dramatic changes to the titles, such as revisions and redesigns for in-game puzzle art. We even got to help create a few all-new puzzles for the first Layton title!

If I were to ask Professor Layton his top five rules for being a true gentleman, what would he respond?

LIN

1. Never explain something with words when a puzzle is available.
2. Helping those in need, even if the assistance is unsolicited, isn't being nosy. It's just common courtesy.
3. No matter how dire the situation, there's always time for a spot of tea.
4. If someone is in danger, tackle them and roll them to safety.
5. Never remove your hat, even if it means raising the roof of your car to accommodate it.

Seeing how they're both professors of archeology, who would win in a showdown between Professor Layton and Indiana Jones?

CHUNOVIC While Layton is no slouch with a fencing foil, Indiana Jones would probably take the crown in a knock-down, drag-out brawl. Plus, if *Raiders of the Lost Ark* is any indication, the guy is strapped with a pistol and not afraid to use it. Professor Layton, refined scholar that he is, most likely wouldn't bring a gun to a gentleman's quarrel.

Conversely, if you're talking about a battle of the minds, I think Professor Layton would solve circles around Indiana Jones. The guy is pretty much unflappable in the face of all but the toughest of puzzles, and his knowledge of world history and events is bound to at least be on par with Indy's.

Sega's lovable primates go bananas for the Wii Balance Board in Super Monkey Ball: Step & Roll.

Monkey on Board

BY STEVE THOMASON

Though it was born in arcades, the Super Monkey Ball franchise has always had strong ties to Nintendo hardware, from the original making its home-console debut on GameCube to Banana Blitz rolling out as part of the Wii console's launch lineup. It should come as little surprise, then, that Sega is prepping an all-new installment for Nintendo's latest piece of equipment: the Wii Balance Board accessory. History aside, it's a natural pairing. The series tasks you with maneuvering its titular primates toward the goal by tilting the stage itself, and Super Monkey Ball: Step & Roll will let you accomplish that by simply shifting your weight on the Wii Balance Board (preferably sans pants like your onscreen counterpart).

Aside from the new interface, the core experience appears largely unchanged. AiAi, MeeMee, GonGon, and Baby all return as playable characters, and bananas are deviously scattered throughout each level, the bonus points they bestow tempting you on the way to the finish line. (And the old control style is still an option if you want it.) The main single-player mode will feature at least seven worlds, each consisting of ten stages. Though the themes for each world are borrowed from Banana Blitz, all of the stage layouts are completely original, and the environments have undergone a significant visual upgrade. New multiplayer minigames will also be included, alongside a number of returning favorites from Banana Blitz. We checked out one of the new games, entitled See Saw Ball. In it, each monkey starts high above a target, and you're tasked with dropping him as close to the center as possible by manipulating a series of floating seesaws. All of the new minigames were designed with the Balance Board in mind, though you can also play the entire game with the Wii Remote controller if you so desire.

Whatever your preferred method of control, more Monkey Ball is almost always a good thing. Plus, a certain feature we can't talk about yet (Sega threatened to trap us in one of those balls) promises a fresh take on the series, and could be very cool. We'll have more on that in a future issue. To tide you over until then, read on for our interview with Step & Roll director Jun Tokuhara.

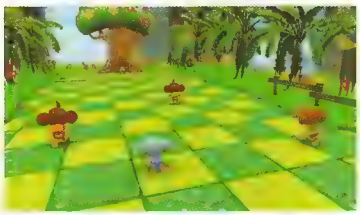
NINTENDO POWER What prompted you to make Step & Roll compatible with the Wii Balance Board? Was the Balance Board your primary impetus for creating the game?

JUN TOKUHARA The Super Monkey Ball franchise has always pushed the interactive nature of video games, and when the Wii Balance Board was released, it seemed like a perfect fit. We wanted to create a game that was fun yet challenged the gamer's athletic abilities. So it was natural to create a game that used the Balance Board. We feel that the Balance Board adds a new layer of excitement and fun, providing an enhanced gameplay experience that fans of Super Monkey Ball will surely enjoy.

How have you had to alter your approach to level design with the Balance Board in mind?

To control the characters in the game by using the body and feet is not as easy as we might have imagined, so the most important task was to develop a game where the users can quickly get familiar with the control mechanics. This

The most cheerful series about enslaved monkeys ever.

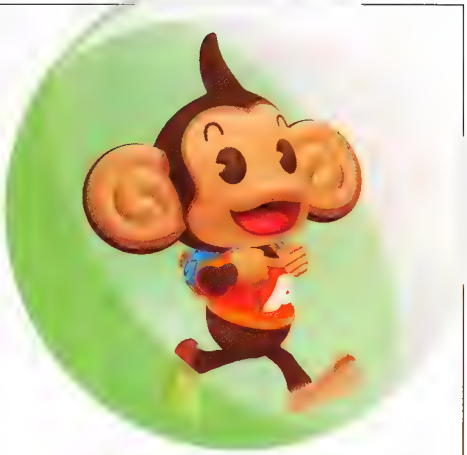


was our first time designing a game where you use your body and feet to control it, so we had a lot of trial and error to make adjustments that would make the controls easy to use and enable even beginners new to the Super Monkey Ball franchise to play the game from beginning to end. We were thinking of even making the stages easier, but decided to focus on the ease of controls and making the progression of levels from easy to difficult gradual. We designed stages for beginners that make the players feel like they are doing well even if they are not exploring what the game has to offer beyond what kinds of things will affect the ball and how.

Will the overall difficulty curve be comparable to the series' previous installments? Will later stages offer a challenge for hardcore fans?
We have many courses with a wider range of difficulty. Because this title supports the Wii Balance Board, we think there will be users who have never played Monkey Ball before. The gradual level of difficulty will make this game enjoyable for gamers of all levels, from beginners to hardcore fans of the franchise. I believe this game will be good for both casual players and users who want to play again and again because we have adjusted the steepness of the difficulty curve for each course depending on whether it's a beginner, intermediate, or expert course.

How does the team come up with ideas for new levels?
It is when we are eating bananas! [Laughs] Well...actually, Monkey Ball is a game of physical behavior, so we're inspired by nature, as well as artificial materials like ruins and railway tracks.

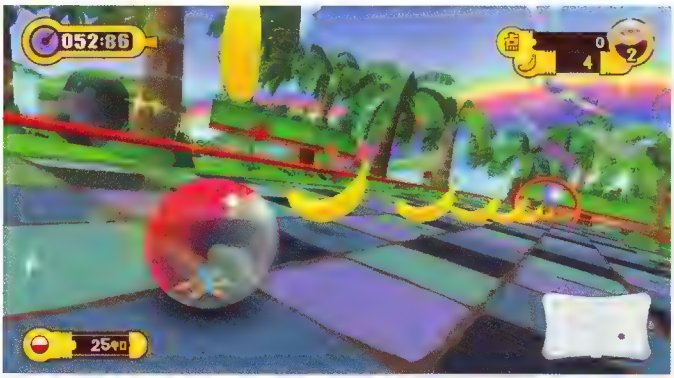
How do you know when a level has been properly tuned and is ready for prime time?
We believe it is properly tuned when we're seeing the following factors in the desired range during playtesting: clear time, number of bananas picked up, overall score, and the balance of difficulty playing with the Wii Balance Board and the Wii Remote.



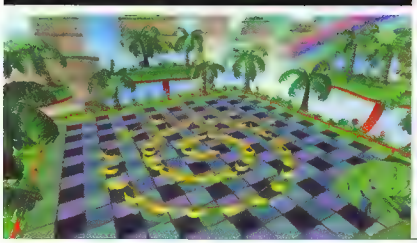
Banana Blitz was the first Monkey Ball game in which you could jump. Will that ability return for Step & Roll, and if so, how will you perform it on the Balance Board?
With Banana Blitz, the jump mechanic was a good fit for the intuitive controls of the Wii Remote and Nunchuk, but with Step & Roll, we are really taking advantage of the Wii Balance Board. Therefore, we have eliminated the jump function on this game.

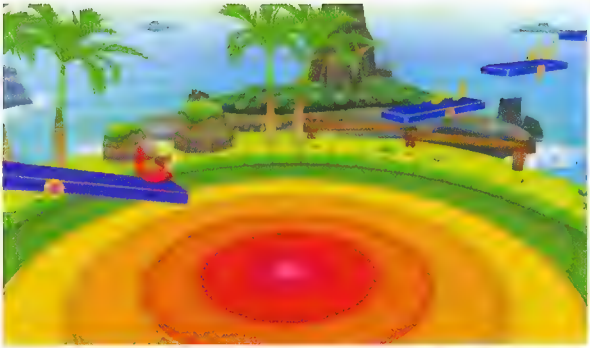
Will the game include any new types of obstacles or gimmicks? If so, can you give us a couple of examples?
We have worked to be very inventive on the level design, so please look forward to it.

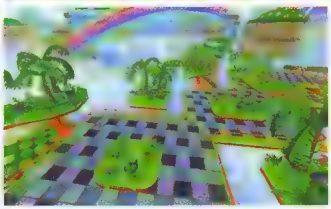
There have been quite a few Monkey Ball titles over the years. How do you try to keep the core gameplay fresh?
We always aim to develop new and enjoyable Monkey Ball games by adjusting the balance of ball



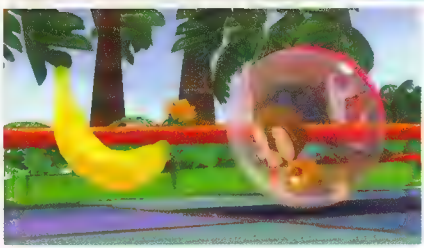
A handy Balance Board display in the lower right-hand corner illustrates where you're shifting your weight.







Each of the minigames, including the new Seesaw Ball pictured above, will offer multiple courses.



control, as well as implementing inventive new level designs that will challenge gamers and keep the gameplay exciting and fresh. Also, we believe that users will enjoy the various new minigames we have created for this title.

Will Step & Roll include boss battles like Banana Blitz?
No, but you can look forward to more fun and exciting environments, as well as the new minigames that Step & Roll has to offer!

How many new minigames will be included, and are you creating them specifically with the Wii Balance Board in mind? Which of the new minigames is your favorite?
I cannot go into specifics just yet, but there will be many games that are inspired through playing with the Wii Balance Board and that no one has ever seen before.

If we're not mistaken, you were a programmer on previous Monkey Ball titles. How did you come to take over directorial duties for Step & Roll?
Maybe because I'm the one who eats the most bananas! [Laughs]

Did previous series director Toshihiro Nagoshi give you any hints or advice as you took the reins for this one?
He told us to remember two important details. One was that we can't forget the simple yet deep original concept, which is controlling the floors and moving the balls to make the monkeys reach their goals. Second was to make the controls easy for all users, from beginners to hardcore.

Where did the idea originally come from to put cute monkeys inside rolling balls?
Nagoshi-san thought of making a game with simple controls first, and then we had an idea to roll a ball on the floors. But we thought just rolling the ball looked weak, so we decided to put something in the ball. Then we created AiAi and his friends because we wanted something everyone in the world can relate to and that had the potential to be cute characters. We thought the monkeys would be suitable for doing comical movement in the ball that would add an extra layer of fun to the games.

Which of the four monkeys is your favorite, and why?
I like all of them and think of them as my family, but maybe MeeMee is my favorite because she looks like my wife. [Laughs]

all together now

we go backstage with harmonix to show you why the beatles: rock band is going to be the ultimate party game—and redefine the genre in the process

BY TOM HOLOIEN

John. Paul. George. Ringo. There isn't a rock fan out there who doesn't know the names of The Beatles. They went from nobodies playing in clubs to living legends playing sold-out stadiums, and in the process they changed the face of music. Harmonix's Rock Band series has always been about putting yourself in the shoes of a band, and with our hands-on look at The Beatles: Rock Band for the Wii console, we'll show you how the game is taking that experience to the next level by putting you behind the instruments of one of the greatest rock bands of all time.

revolution

Although it preserves much of the core gameplay from previous Rock Band titles, The Beatles: Rock Band is a very different experience. In fact, when the game was first announced last October, it didn't carry the Rock Band moniker. Chris Foster, director of design at Harmonix, tells us the team wanted "to tell the Beatles' story," and because this game is about a real band, it had to be built differently from other Rock Band games. Foster was quick to point out, though, that this game "is not a history lesson." Going beyond just showing you the Beatles' story, The Beatles: Rock Band is about experiencing the band's journey, from beginning to end. As Foster puts it, "This is you there, at the moment, not looking back." The game was built around that concept, as evidenced by its various new features.

The career mode of The Beatles: Rock Band takes you through the group's history and puts you in the Fab Four's shoes. It begins with a series of historical venues, starting, like the Beatles did, with the Cavern Club in London. As The Beatles grow into a bigger and bigger sensation, you follow them from the set of *The Ed Sullivan Show* to the massive concert in New York City's Shea Stadium, and finally to Nippon Budokan in Tokyo, all the while playing the same music they performed at each venue. In real life, The Beatles retreated to the studio at Abbey Road until their famous London rooftop concert. But here Harmonix was faced with a problem: how to stay true to the band's history while still giving the player a venue to perform in.

The answer: a brand-new, artistic kind of gameplay called Dreamscapes. Foster and a few of Harmonix's other designers and artists listened to The Beatles' later songs and then tried to create an artistic interpretation of each song to accompany the music in the game. From the serene fields of "Here Comes the Sun" to the psychedelic journey of "I Am the Walrus," these Dreamscapes bring a brand-new dimension to The Beatles' music; it's hard not to get goose bumps. This is truly a unique take on the beloved foursome's music, and even people who have followed The Beatles from their early days will enjoy it.

i've got a feeling

So how does one go about creating these Dreamscapes, or for that matter, creating The Beatles themselves? The artists at Harmonix did a truly fantastic job re-creating the band members in digital form, but as we learned, they had plenty of help.

More than other Rock Band games, The Beatles: Rock Band requires a unique aesthetic experience, which led Harmonix's artists to collaborate directly with Apple Corps (the multimedia corporation founded by The Beatles) to be as authentic as possible. Dare Matheson, character concept lead, tells us that they wanted to "deliver each character's vibe," and to do that they got high-resolution images of The Beatles and the historical venues directly from Apple Corps's archival department. Every aspect of the musicians' styles, even the ways that they moved, was reproduced for the game to really give the player a sense of what it felt like to be The Beatles. The historical venues were also re-created in this way, to "give the player a sense of what it would have been like to play in those venues," says Matheson. One example of this is the set of *The Ed Sullivan Show*—though TV was shown in black and white in those days, the show's set is replicated in full color to give the sense of what it would have been like to be there rather than watch the broadcast.

The Dreamscapes are where the art team really got a chance to shine, and they didn't disappoint. "These songs are transporting, and we wanted to show that visually," explains Matheson. After listening to songs over and over again, the designers would try to come up with something that could "deliver the emotional impact" of the song. Matheson tells us that this didn't necessarily mean that the Dreamscapes would have anything to do with the lyrics of the songs they represented. "They're a visceral experience," he says, "hooked into emotional, not literal, themes." This is clearly seen in the Dreamscape for "I Am the Walrus." Rather than showing "Yellow matter custard, dripping from a dead dog's eye" or an "elementary penguin singing Hare Krishna," Harmonix takes the player on a visual journey that captures the crazy feel of the song without being literal with the imagery, and in doing so they create a far more powerful (and incredibly weird) experience for the player.

In the end, the artists were faced with a daunting task. Matheson says, "There was a sense

The Beatles: Rock Band stays true to the Rock Band series while capturing the Fab Four's enduring style and musical legacy.

PLATFORM Wii | PUBLISHER MTV GAMES | DEVELOPER HARMONIX | RELEASE SEPTEMBER 2009

getting better

There is a total of 45 songs on The Beatles: Rock Band disc, and more coming in the form of downloadable content. Here are the 25 tracks that we know of so far.

"And Your Bird Can Sing"
"Back in the USSR"
"Birthday"
"Can't Buy Me Love"
"Day Tripper"
"Dig A Pony"
"Do You Want To Know A Secret"
"Eight Days A Week"
"Get Back"
"Here Comes the Sun"
"I Am the Walrus"
"I Feel Fine"
"I Saw Her Standing There"
"I Wanna Be Your Man"
"I Want to Hold Your Hand"
"I've Got A Feeling"
"Octopus's Garden"
"Paperback Writer"
"Revolution"
"Sgt. Pepper's LHCB"
"Taxman"
"Twist And Shout"
"While My Guitar Gently Weeps"
"With A Little Help From My Friends"
"Within You Without You / Tomorrow Never Knows"

of opportunity, but also one of responsibility. We didn't want to do a 'retro, throwback thing,' but we also didn't want to be too modern and disrespectful." The end result of their hard labor is something that combines the old and the new into something completely unique. The art of The Beatles: Rock Band is a large part of what makes it feel like an experience, not just a game.

come together

Of course, the heart of The Beatles: Rock Band lies in the music, and a number of gameplay changes from the Rock Band norm both major and minor, to bring The Beatles' musical experience to life.

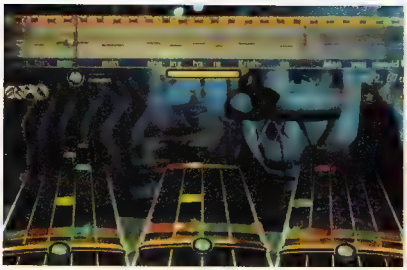
Most notable are the new multi-part vocals. Josh Randall, creative director at Harmonix, tells us that the new harmonies weren't something they put in just to change up the gameplay. He explains, "The Beatles have great harmonies. More mics were needed to replicate the experience of the band." In fact, Randall says many of the gameplay changes for The Beatles: Rock Band were made because the developers felt like they had to stay true to the music.

So how do these new harmonies work? When you fire up the game and choose your band members, the singer can choose whether to go solo or use multiplayer vocals, and you can connect up to three microphones along with your two guitars and your drums. That means you can now play the game with six people, and the feeling you get playing Beatles songs with three vocalists is much more powerful than belting them out alone. Singing is additive—as long as one of the singers performs the main part, your multiplier will carry over. If the other singers hit the second or third harmonies, you'll gain bonus points in the form of double and triple "Fabs." Best of all, at the end of the song you can see a percentage breakdown of the time each singer was singing each part—providing solid evidence to settle those arguments about who wasn't pulling their weight.

Not everyone is a trained musician, of course, and though most of Harmonix's employees are members of a band, they recognize that singing harmonies can be pretty difficult. Given that, they've included a new vocal-training mode so you can learn to sing any part you want. Chris Foster tells us they "didn't just want to make a lesson bank," as they did with the drum trainer in Rock Band 2. Rather, you can pull up any song in the vocal trainer, skip to the section you want, and easily cycle through vocal parts with the press of a button. However, because The Beatles didn't record their vocal tracks separately, it was impossible to isolate a single track for the player to sing along with. The developers came up with a pretty good solution: they recorded a flute sound over each vocal line, and that flute will play the correct pitch for the vocal track you have selected. It sounds complicated, but it's actually relatively simple: you'll hear the whole audio track in the background and see all three vocal lines, but the track you choose to work on will be highlighted visually and aurally so you can pick it out better. It works surprisingly well, and it had us nailing harmonies within minutes.

There are a few other minor changes as well, most of them geared toward making the game more accessible and staying true to The Beatles' music. For instance, hitting the whammy bar will still add Overdrive to your meter, but it will no longer affect the sound of the guitar. Additionally, there are no more drum fills—instead a single note will be replaced by the green

The game's venues range from clubs to stadiums to trippy-cool Dreamscapes.



ticket to ride

The Premium Edition box comes with the drums, the Höfner bass, a mic with a stand, and the game. The Rickenbacker and Gretsch Duo are only sold individually.

deployment note, allowing you to deploy Overdrive without stepping all over Ringo's beats. Other such changes include the ability to toggle No Fail mode directly from the band select screen and the fact that spoken parts (which can be a challenge with Beatles music) no longer affect your vocal score. All that aside, though, the core Rock Band gameplay is there, along with Rock Band 2 additions such as downloadable content, the drum trainer, and online co-op and versus multiplayer. Fans of the earlier Rock Band games will have no trouble adapting to the Beatles: Rock Band.

while my guitar gently weeps

No music game would be complete without plastic instruments. Beyond just a way to play the game, though, the instruments for The Beatles: Rock Band are replicas that help foster an authentic Beatles experience. If you buy the new instrument bundle, retailing for $249.99, you'll get Ringo's black Ludwig drum set with pearl finish, Paul's Höfner 500/1 bass, a microphone, and a microphone stand (and the game, of course). Those who want to get the full Beatles experience can lay down $99.99 for a replica of John's Rickenbacker 325 or George's Gretsch Duo Jet guitars.

Those prices may seem a bit steep, but we can assure you that the instruments play great, and the amount of detail that has gone into the reproductions is staggering. "We tried to represent The Beatles through the hardware," explains Daniel Sussman, director of hardware development at Harmonix, "and rebuild these iconic instruments that people will recognize." While the drums were easy to replicate, the guitars, which are built to scale, were another matter. Working off high-resolution images and even blocks of colored wood from the guitar companies, Harmonix's hardware team crafted every aspect of the guitars, from the tailpieces to the pick guards, with a very high attention to detail.

However, all the new instruments had to be backward-compatible with older versions of Rock Band, and they had to be user-friendly—after all, Harmonix is looking to bring in new gamers with this title. To that end, two changes had to be made to the Höfner bass—it had to be right-handed, and it had to have a whammy bar. Sussman acknowledges that some people may find fault with those characteristics. "These are not oversights," he stresses. "We had a heated debate about these things for weeks." But in the end, none of the alternatives they could come up with for the whammy bar were as user-friendly as a normal whammy would be, and they "had to make it comfortable for most people." Makes sense to us—after all, the Höfner turned out to be our favorite of the new guitar controllers.

Sure, they may not be for everybody, but that's why the game and the instruments can be purchased separately. Gamers who need replacements or who don't already own music controllers will be hard-pressed to find any that feel or look as good as these.

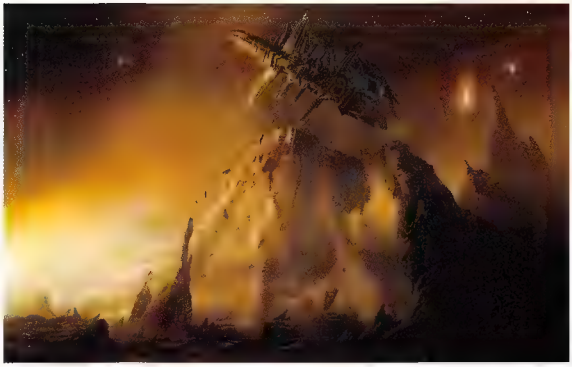
all you need is love

The Beatles: Rock Band is not like previous music games that have focused on a single artist. With this game, Harmonix has preserved the Rock Band feel while giving music lovers a brand-new way to experience The Beatles. Best of all, the Wii version is the exact same game as the version for other systems, and Harmonix is looking to Nintendo's console to bring the franchise to a new audience. As Foster puts it, with the Wii console's proliferation into demographics that didn't play games before, "Wii is the best on-road for what games have to offer. It's a cool place for people to do fun things." We're betting a lot of Wii owners love The Beatles and have never picked up a Rock Band guitar, and a lot of rhythm-game fans probably don't really know The Beatles. Once again, Harmonix is taking chances with new ideas and new gameplay, and we can't wait to get our hands on the final product.

FIRST CONTACT

FIND OUT THE ORIGINS OF DEAD SPACE'S HORRORS IN THE Wii-EXCLUSIVE PREQUEL DEAD SPACE EXTRACTION.

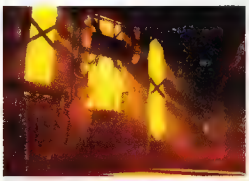
BY JUSTIN CHENG



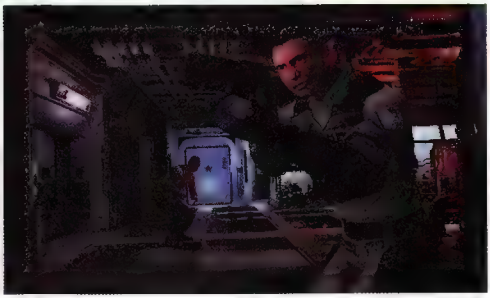
Survival-horror in space—it's such a simple concept, yet no video game had really nailed it until 2008's Dead Space. In that Mature-rated adventure, players assumed the role of Isaac Clarke, who was part of a crew sent to assist the mining ship USG *Ishimura*, a seemingly deserted vessel that was actually filled with monstrous, once-human creatures called Necromorphs. As Isaac ventured through the derelict spacecraft, he discovered that all of the horror could be traced back to the removal of an item known as the Marker from the surface of the planet Aegis VII. "The moment we chose to start our game was the extraction of the Marker," says John Calhoun, the senior designer of Dead Space's upcoming prequel, Dead Space Extraction. "Before that moment, everything on Aegis VII and the *Ishimura* is fine. But as soon as the colonists move it to study it, that's when everything goes wrong. That's when the Necromorphs start to appear. That's when people start to suffer from these hallucinations and the dementia, when they start to turn on each other."

As Extraction begins, a team of people—including a main character named Lexine and the man you initially control, Nathan McNeill—is trying to escape from the ravaged Aegis VII to what they believe is their closest safe haven: the *Ishimura*. It's not smooth sailing, however, as they encounter dangers both from asteroids that float about and from the crewmembers of the *Ishimura* who are under orders to destroy any incoming vessels from Aegis VII. Disregarding the crew's threats and missiles, McNeill and company board the mining ship anyway.

But although you play as McNeill during this early part of the game, you'll assume the roles of other characters as the story progresses. ("If someone dies off, for example," teases Calhoun.) In Chapter 7, for instance, you are a scientist named Dr. Karen Howell. Calhoun tells us, "In a previous



[Right] To defeat the Necromorphs, you have to dismember them, so aim for the limbs and not the face.

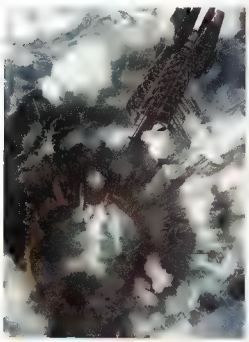


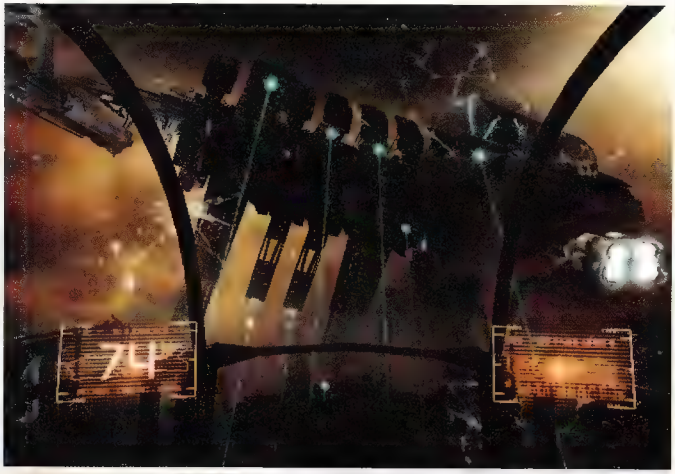
[Left] Like zombies, Necromorphs are tenacious. They'll keep crawling after you even if you blast their legs off.

chapter, she saw what she believes is the death of the party that you've been playing up to this point. So she thinks she's the last survivor, and she's going to be recording a personal audio log. And her goal is to try to get to a tram station where she'll hopefully find some more survivors, get to a shuttle, and escape the *Ishimura*." There's one little snag in her plan, however; the Necromorph infection is making her demented. She's hearing strange voices and seeing some alien hieroglyphic language on the walls, among other crazy things. "This is actually one of the first times that the player's actually seeing it firsthand—and especially to this degree," Calhoun proclaims. "Up to this point, the player has had some hallucinations, heard some things, but never quite as severe as this."

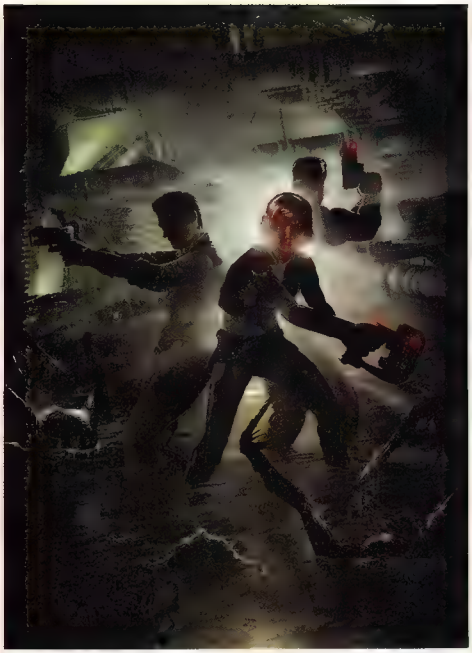
FIGHT TO SURVIVE

While dealing with this sudden onset of madness, you have to shoot your way through waves of Necromorphs. As Extraction is a light-gun shooter in the vein





[Above] As Nathan McNeill, you have to fight your way onto the *Ishimura*. As the adage goes, out of the frying pan....



of Resident Evil: The Umbrella Chronicles, the controls are easy to grasp. You aim by pointing at the screen with the Wii Remote controller, and you shoot by pressing B. You reload by tapping Z, and if you tap Z again when the meter moves into the sweet spot on the reloading icon, you can reload more quickly than if you wait for the meter to fill on its own. As in the original Dead Space, you have access to powers beyond the norm: you can temporarily freeze enemies in place with a power called Stasis by pressing C, and you can grab objects in the environment with your telekinesis by tapping A. At certain points (indicated by the arrows that appear around your reticle), the largely on-rails game relinquishes some of the camera control to you, so you can look around for hidden weapons, ammo, and other items.

Naturally, Extraction makes use of some motion controls when you're striking with your melee attack (swing the Nunchuk controller) and when you're grabbed by an enemy (shake the remote then press A when prompted to escape). The Control Stick also plays a key role in the combat—you can select up to four weapons at a time, with each weapon assigned to a different direction (up, down, left, right) on the Control Stick. Calhoun says that this ability to change weapons quickly "actually makes it really strategic because the weapons are designed to work in pairs. Sometimes a weapon will knock people back and a different weapon will take advantage of the fact that they've all been knocked out into a group—like the Arc Welder—and you can toast them all at once."

Strategy plays a larger role than it does in many light-gun-style games. You can't simply go for a headshot and be done with an enemy; dispatching the Necromorphs requires that you dismember them. One of the easiest ways is to use the Plasma Cutter, a signature weapon from the first game. It fires a horizontal bladelike projectile, which is very handy for slicing off limbs. But sometimes you want to slice vertically. Fortunately, you can do just

INSTRUMENTS of DESTRUCTION

Many of the weapons from the original Dead Space carry over to Dead Space Extraction, but some have undergone significant changes and some have been created specifically for this game. Senior designer John Calhoun gives us a rundown of some of the more notable ones.

RIPPER This buzz-saw-like weapon, which you can now move freely on the screen using the Wii Remote, has "been completely built from the ground up for the Wii controls. It's probably one of the most fun weapons in the game—not necessarily the most popular in the first Dead Space, but definitely the most popular in Extraction because of the way it controls."

ARC WELDER (1) "It works really well with the Wii Remote, and works well with a light-gun-style game because it does have a very narrow distance at which it can fire. But if you have enemies all in a group, which happens in a light-gun-style game, you can get them all at once. So it's a great weapon to switch to if you see that you're being surrounded. You can clear them off all simultaneously."

RIVET GUN (2) "[It] was designed to be that backup tool. In fact, it's not even a weapon at all; it's literally a rivet gun...it's something that miners use.... It fires off these laser-sliced pieces of metal, so you don't actually have to have rivets in there; it creates rivets as it shoots." In other words, any piece of metal in the environment can become its ammo, "which is why it has infinite ammo, but also why it's kind of weak."

[Below] Lexine plays a role in several chapters.

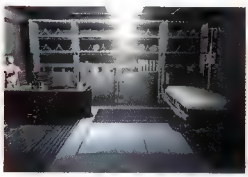
that by twisting the Wii Remote 90 degrees like a doorknob. (Not all weapons work exactly like that, of course—for those that don't, rotating the remote activates the weapon's alternate-fire mode.) In addition, certain darkened levels require what Calhoun calls the "glow worm," which is basically a glow stick that is recharged by shaking the Wii Remote.

Howell does not have one of these glow worms as she makes her way through the dank hallways of the Ishimura, but she couldn't really use it even if she did. The Necromorph infection is causing her to see flashes of color. The screen goes bright white or red for a moment before shifting back to normal. Well, as normal as it gets for her at this time—there's a faint black border surrounding the perimeter of the screen, almost like tunnel vision. In that condition, Howell comes across an injured Lexine. Understandably, Lexine wants to search for her friends, whereas Howell is focused solely on survival. The fact that the Necromorphs are overrunning the place makes their decision a bit easier; they have to get out of the immediate area—and fast.

Sadly, it doesn't seem that they're quite fast enough. A Brute, one of the bigger Necromorphs, drops from the ceiling and smacks Lexine unconscious. This bad boy was the first boss in the original game, but Calhoun reveals, "in our game he's just a miniboss. So the trick here is to try to get behind him. And to do that, you want to Stasis him at just the right moment, so hit his back. As you can see, just hitting him from the front stops him a little bit, but [it's] not very effective." Alternatively, you can sever the Brute's arms to stop him from constantly charging at you. He then changes tack and tosses explosive orbs your way; you can catch these orbs with your telekinesis and blast them back at the Brute.

NEVER FIGHT ALONE

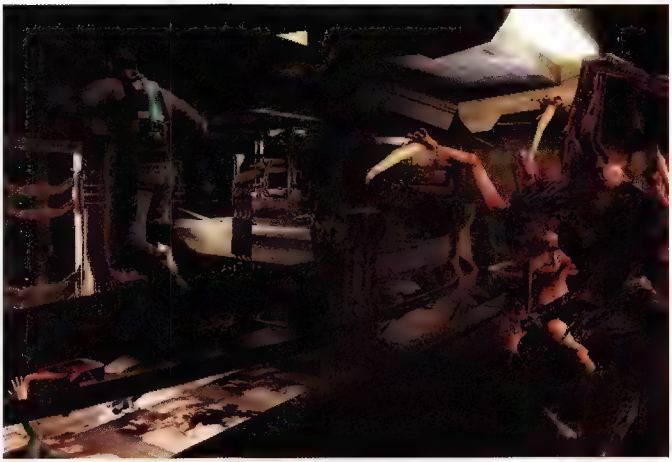
Working with a partner can make survival easier. At any point, a second player can drop in and join the fun. "Wii has a reputation for being a more social platform and so we definitely wanted to capitalize on that," elaborates Calhoun. "We know a lot of people out there like playing with their friends, with their family, and so we wanted to support that. But the other reason [for the co-op play] is that we wanted to kind of move away from strict survival-horror rules—which are, you're alone, you have to really watch your back, [and] conserve ammo all the time—and move more in the direction of action-horror." That said, you still need to watch your ammo supplies; because both players share one ammo pool, you want to ensure that neither you nor your buddy is shooting willy-nilly. (Thankfully, you each have your own health bar.)



You and your partner will have to rely on one another quite a bit, because the action is frantic even when you're solving puzzles. Calhoun explains, "Sometimes you'll come across a panel...to an elevator or something that activates the security systems. You can use your remote to trace and solder these circuits back together, sometimes moving chips into place, to restore power." He continues, "So in two-player games, you trade off. So player one has to solder the first section, then player two has to take over. And one of the things we were really excited about [bringing] to the game is the ability to do puzzles and have combat simultaneously. So sometimes you'll see the puzzle on the right side and enemies are attacking on the left. And if you restore power, it'll shut the doors, but until you do that, those enemies are going to keep appearing. So in one-player games, it's really frantic, lots of high energy. And in two-player games, it's very strategic because while one person's doing the puzzle, the other person can defend them." But don't think you're going to leave the puzzle-solving to your friend as you do all the shooting; the players automatically swap duties as each section of the puzzle is completed.

In other survival-horror games, you can rest easy when you come across a piece of information; time seems to pause as you read the handy notes some random person has left behind for you to find. Not so in Extraction. "Sometimes you'll find audio logs in the game, and when you do, you'll hear it very faintly come from the Wii Remote's speaker. And so you're like, 'What are they saying?' And as you bring it up to your ear, it'll actually get louder. Of course, when you're doing this," notes Calhoun as he puts the remote to his ear, "what aren't you doing?" Calhoun points at the Necromorph-filled television screen. "And so it's kind of, 'Oh, is he telling me something really important, is he telling me a hint that's going to get me through the level faster, is he telling me a secret?' Simultaneously, you're trying to blast enemies. So, again, sometimes it's good to have that second player with you."

With this emphasis on virtually nonstop action, it's clear that Dead Space Extraction is staying close to its light-gun-shooter roots. And that's certainly not a bad thing; after all, as Calhoun puts it, "What would be more fun than strategic dismemberment in a light-gun-style game?"



[Above] You're never taken out of the first-person perspective. Here, you're watching your friends jump off the balcony, then you'll follow suit.

June 5, 1965

San Francisco, CA

Director of design, Telltale Games

Being one of the major creative forces behind the Monkey Island and Strong Bad games, knowing the secret of The Secret of Monkey Island

Coconut pops

Tales of Monkey Island, Wallace & Gromit's Grand Adventures, Sam & Max

Dave Grossman

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINA EMPEDOCLES

When you think of legendary adventure games, you have to think of the great PC titles produced by LucasArts in the early 1990s, such as The Secret of Monkey Island and Maniac Mansion: Day of the Tentacle. One of the people instrumental to the success of those titles was Dave Grossman. A master at testing gamers' wits and tickling their funny bones, Grossman is now the director of design at Telltale Games, where he continues to refine and redefine the point-and-click adventure genre with titles such as Strong Bad's Cool Game for Attractive People on WiiWare. Having recently returned to the series he helped make famous, Grossman is currently working on the episodic swashbuckling quest Tales of Monkey Island (among other things), proving that monkey business is good business.

NINTENDO POWER
How did you first become involved with the video game (or computer game) industry?
DAVE GROSSMAN
Total accident. Well, partial accident—I was genuinely looking for a job, and one where I got to do something with computers. I was a recent graduate-school dropout with some knowledge of artificial intelligence, and I wanted to do something that didn't involve missile-guidance systems or other morally reprehensible activity (this was before Night Trap and Mortal Kombat, so games had a more hensible reputation). I answered an advertisement at Lucasfilm; simple as that. I'm not exactly sure why they hired me, but Zak McCracken designer David Fox later told me that my résumé caught his eye because I had listed "apple juice" as an interest. It's the little things that count in life, apparently.

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?
I discovered computers in junior high when my mother began programming them professionally, and I took to that right away. The idea that they could do more or less anything, and that they would do exactly what I told them, seemed enormously ripe with possibility. Still does, actually, and I do still think like a programmer and occasionally write computer code.

What was it like working at LucasArts back in what some people would consider the heyday of the company?
Part of George Lucas's vision for Skywalker Ranch was to have it be a creative retreat of sorts, and that's pretty much what it felt like. A bunch of interesting people in a gorgeous rural setting, with great food and nothing to do but invent fun with whatever tools were at hand. It was idyllic and collaborative and whimsical—and somewhat unrealistic, as well; it was like I was driving to work every day on another planet where the rules were different, and my brain had difficulty accepting it. After The Secret of Monkey Island, the games group moved off the ranch, which was startling, but that spirit of unbridled creative collaboration endured—looks like it really was the group of people rather than the setting after all. This was my first job in the industry, of course, and it left me with irrational expectations of what other situations would be like.

How did you end up making the transition to Humongous and then to Telltale?
It was Ron Gilbert who pulled me into the projects I did with Humongous. He and I already had a good working relationship; indeed, I came close to leaving LucasArts to start Humongous with him, and when I eventually did depart to work freelance, they became one of my earliest and steadiest clients. At the time I would not have been likely to be mistaken for a children's author, and to begin with I worked on a couple of grown-up adventures with Ron. These were never built, but one day he called me up and said basically, "I know you don't normally write for kids, but we've got this game in the works with a weird sensibility that I think you'd be good for. Want to write it?"

Telltale was also cofounded by a friend of mine, Dan Connors, another Lucas alumnus whom I knew mainly because we made weird public-access television together in the 1990s. When the company started in 2004 I was wrapped up in other things, but a year later I hopped on board in time for [Bone Episode 2:] The Great Cow Race. The small-studio atmosphere, story focus, and savvy internet sensibility made me decide to commit to my first regular salaried position since I left Lucas 11 years earlier.

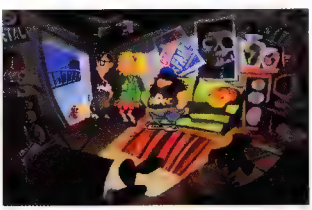
What do you think of as the core philosophy behind Telltale's games?
I think the most important thing is this: rather than simply selling the audience a product, we want to have a relationship with them over time (nothing creepy, I promise). The episodic nature of our games is part of this, where there's a whole season's worth of titles that becomes part of your life and plays out over a period of five months or so, instead of one big lump and then you walk away. Also central to the philosophy is our commitment

GAMEOGRAPHY

Grossman made the biggest impact on gaming with the PC titles he worked on at LucasArts and his recent endeavors at Telltale, but in between he worked on a number of kid-friendly games with an educational slant.

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND
1990, PC
ASSISTANT DESIGNER/PROGRAMMER

MONKEY ISLAND 2: LECHUCK'S REVENGE
1991, PC
ASSISTANT DESIGNER/PROGRAMMER



MANIAC MANSION: DAY OF THE TENTACLE
1993, PC, DESIGNER
CO-DESIGNER, CO-DIRECTOR, CO-PRODUCER, PROGRAMMER, WRITER

Power Profiles

to rich characters and great stories over polygon counts and adrenaline. Telltale has an unusually high ratio of writers and artists to engineers for a game studio.

Point-and-click-style adventure games have obviously had their ups and downs over the years. What appeals to you about the genre, and why does Telltale continue to specialize in this type of game?
Adventure games aren't explicitly part of the Telltale vision, but they are a remarkably versatile way to tell stories with games, which is what we like about them. They put the focus on the frontal lobe, with success being dependent on your comprehension and involvement with the narrative and the cast. Some games are like sports, but adventure games are like stories.

People have been talking about episodic gaming for a long time, but Telltale is one of the few companies that's been able to do it and do it right. What do you like about the downloadable, episodic format? What's the secret to succeeding in that arena?
The episodic format lets us explore things with the audience over a long period of time, which means stories can feel more epic, we learn more about the characters, and the whole experience is just generally broader. The downloadable aspect is what allows this to be possible on any sort of reasonable schedule—to ship each episode out on discs would be prohibitively time-consuming, not to mention expensive. As for the secret to success, well...(I'm whispering now) the recipe is mainly careful planning, flexibility, technology, and good old-fashioned talent. Oh, and cumin. Cumin makes everything better.

How involved are you in choosing the licenses you go after? What do you think makes a good license for your type of games and your type of audience?
I do help evaluate licenses, which is a fun part of the job. We look for worlds where there's a unique creative spark, interesting characters, and a lot of possibilities; worlds where we would be able to tell a variety of stories. I try to imagine what sort of things the player will do in those stories, hunting for material where Telltale would really be the best developer for it. I mean, if I look at a license and am struck by the fact that it would make a great first-person shooter, then there are dozens of more appropriate studios than us to do that, but if it's something like Wallace & Gromit where I'd expect to be tinkering with gadgets, engaging with people and thinking my way out of outrageous situations, that's something where we can do a better job than anyone out there.

"Some games are like sports, but adventure games are like stories."

Another thing that's really hard to do is humor, yet you seem to be able to nail it much better than most. What's your approach?
I've never thought of humor as being especially hard. It's work, certainly, but I think it's more forgiving than drama. If a gag falls flat here and there you're probably fine, but if a dramatic moment falls flat it can undermine the entire experience.

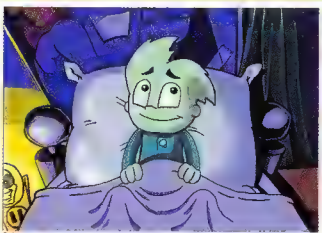
What are some of the strangest things you learned about the Strong Bad universe during the creation of Strong Bad's Cool Game for Attractive People?
It's difficult to rank elements of Strong Bad's world according to strangeness, as it's all rather bizarre. It's on 10 all the time. Is a wagon full of pancakes that has a wife and children more or less strange than a company that sells flashbacks or a superhero who collects damp towels?

How does it feel to return to Monkey Island after all these years?
Good, and also slightly surreal. I had more or less assumed that I wouldn't have the opportunity to do anything with Monkey Island again—which actually didn't bother me in the slightest. But then all of a sudden here we are, and I'm reminded of how much fun the characters and the humor style are, and it's like bumping into someone at the supermarket and suddenly realizing that it's a dear friend you lost touch with ages ago. You reconnect, and both of you have changed a bit with the passage of time, but it's familiar and comfortable just the same.

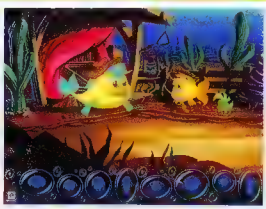
What are the biggest differences between working on Monkey Island back in the day and working on it now?
I think there are two important things that make the games themselves slightly different. One is the episodic format, where instead of a few large acts, the story is told using many smaller acts over several months. This has the effect of making the experience seem at once more epic and more casual. Which I like, by the way. The other thing is voice recording, which has been used in Monkey Island before, but not way back in 1991 when I was last working on it.

Other than that the games are quite familiar, but from my own personal point of view, the experience of me working on them is not

GAMEOGRAPHY



PAJAMA SAM IN: NO NEED TO HIDE WHEN IT'S DARK OUTSIDE
1996, PC
WRITER



FREDDI FISH 4: THE CASE OF THE HOGFISH RUSTLERS OF BRINY GULCH
1999, PC
WRITER, PUZZLE DESIGNER

SAM & MAX SEASON ONE (EPISODIC)
2006-2007, PC
WRITER, DESIGNER

similar at all. My job and role on the project are different, it's a different studio, different format. I've got two decades of additional perspective, and so has the world at large. Fortunately, Guybrush Threepwood hasn't changed a bit. Except maybe the beard.

I'm sure you've been asked this plenty of times already, but would you like to return to Maniac Mansion/Day of the Tentacle if given the chance?
I'm sure it would be just as much fun as working with the monkeys again has been, but to tell you the truth, I haven't given it much thought.

How have things changed in the video game industry since you started?
Well, the primary change has been one of size—20 years ago the games industry was relatively tiny; now it's a tremendous juggernaut with billions of dollars flowing daily through its veins. Which is great for visibility and opportunity, but has also put us in a competitive position where a triple-A title puts so much money at risk that it's hard to justify trying anything very interesting with one. Fortunately, the internet came into its own in there somewhere, and has become a viable place to sell games. This means a smaller studio can reach a geographically diverse niche market effectively, so not everybody has to make triple-A titles to survive, which means more innovation, and the whole arena becomes a lot more interesting. We're saved!

"...the recipe is mainly careful planning, flexibility, technology, and good old-fashioned talent. Oh, and cumin."

What aspect of creating a video game do you enjoy the most?
The single day that's the most fun is the day all of the voice auditions come in. Listening to those is fantastically entertaining. Hearing one person doing a funny voice is amusing; hearing 25 people reading the same lines in different funny voices is something everybody should try at least once.

When you're stumped by a particularly difficult problem while creating a game, what's your process for working through it?
Talking. No, not to myself—to other people. Your average thorny problem can be outflanked by a change of perspective, and there's nothing like other people for providing more perspectives.

What other games or game creators do you most admire or respect, and why?
I always put Shigeru Miyamoto high on my list for the old Zelda games, the structures of which I think display a real mastery of the drama of gameplay. The physical spaces accomplish foreshadowing and revelation as well as any novel. The result is that the games are page-turners, like a J.K. Rowling book, and you can't put them down. It's inspiring.

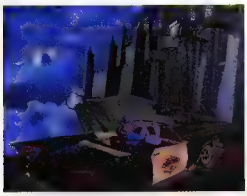
I also have a huge respect for Ron Gilbert, to whom I owe much. His games are always awesome and I learned plenty about how to make good adventures by working with him, but beyond that I also think that whatever good habits I may have about leading a team of creative people come mainly from trying to emulate Ron. He's a rare gem.

Whose works in other forms of media, such as film or literature, do you most admire or enjoy?
I've been rereading Kurt Vonnegut again.... I'm also fond of Wodehouse and Douglas Adams for their floral comedic styles. Mark Twain. Poe for his unrivaled creepiness. My favorite poet is Piet Hein, who can make the same poem be pithy and funny in more than one language. At the movies I tend to like things with interesting structures, like *Pulp Fiction* or *Memento* or *Primer*, but don't really follow individual directors or writers for some reason. A yardstick I do use is that I'll see pretty much anything that has either Johnny Depp or Parker Posey in it, because they seem to make good choices about which movies to be in.

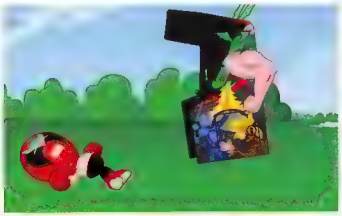
We were surprised to see that you've written a few books, including a book of poetry. What appeals to you about that as a creative outlet?
Thanks for bringing up *Ode to the Stuff in the Sink*, the most hilarious book of "guy poetry" on the market! I've always been someone who likes to play with words, and have been doing a poem for my Phrenopolis website (www.phrenopolis.com) more or less every week since 1995. Working in such a short form with a regular deadline probably prepared me for the madness of designing episodic games more than anything else, but it's also just fun to do. Crafting a poem, for me, tends to fall as a creative experience somewhere in the space between singing and telling a joke.

What is your favorite hobby or pastime?
I like bicycling when I can find the time. For scenery rather than speed or exercise. In 1994 I rode from San Francisco to Canada, a trip I consider among the high points of my existence on this planet so far.

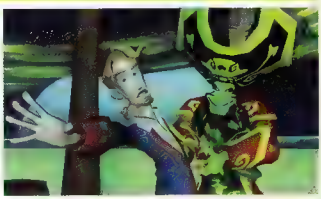
If you could have one superpower, what would it be?
I would be invulnerable. I'm basically an insecure person. Forget helping anybody or doing anything useful; I just don't want to get hurt. And in comic books invulnerable people seem to be immune to aging, which would also be good. I hope to live a very long time, because there's always so much interesting stuff going on and I would hate to miss anything.



SAM & MAX SEASON TWO (EPISODIC)
2007-2008, PC
DESIGN DIRECTOR, WRITER, DESIGNER



STRONG BAD'S COOL GAME FOR ATTRACTIVE PEOPLE (EPISODIC)
2008, WiiWARE/PC
DESIGN DIRECTOR



TALES OF MONKEY ISLAND (EPISODIC)
2009, WiiWARE/PC
DESIGN DIRECTOR

SUPER STAR WARS

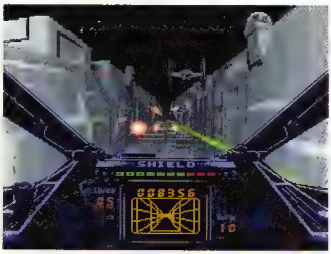
A long time ago on a video game console far, far away...

Slicing a bantha's face with a lightsaber might seem a little harsh, but in Luke's defense, we heard that the bantha *did* shoot first.

PLATFORM: SUPER NES
PUBLISHER: JVC
DEVELOPER: SCULPTURED SOFTWARE
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 1992
COVERED IN ISSUES: 38, 40, 42, 43, 44, 46, 48, 56, 90
MANDATORY JAWA KILLS: 32

Remember that part in *Star Wars* where Luke Skywalker scales the outside of a heavily fortified sandcrawler, blasts a bunch of Jawas, then jumps inside and fights a giant monster in a pool of molten metal in order to rescue R2-D2? Or the part where Han Solo runs through the Death Star hanger bay, somersaulting over TIE fighters and battling a huge bipedal mech? What about the part where Chewbacca climbs a deadly shaft to reach the tractor-beam core, then blows it into oblivion? You would if you played Super Star Wars for the Super NES.

OK, so Super Star Wars might play fast and loose with the events of the legendary original *Star Wars* film, but it does so with a whole lot of fun and a whole lot of style. Despite all the changes, the game does follow the movie in the ways that matter most, taking you from the deserts of Tatooine to the city of Mos Eisley to the hazardous Death Star and then into the cockpit of an X-wing for the dramatic final battle. Combine that classic framework with fast-paced side-scrolling action, and you get one of the best movie-based games ever made. What the game lacks in precision it makes up for with nonstop running, jumping, sliding, shooting, and saber-slicing as Luke, Han, and Chewie wipe out every stormtrooper, Tusken Raider, droid, and womp rat they see.



What made Super Star Wars especially satisfying was its excellent production values. Detailed visuals let players interact with convincing *Star Wars* locations for the first time on a console, and the sound was even better than the graphics; somehow the developers managed to almost perfectly re-create the epic John Williams score using the Super NES's sound chip, and occasional movie voice clips ("Stay on target!") made the game that much more absorbing. A few 3-D vehicle stages—using then-cutting-edge Mode-7 technology—added some nice variety and further emphasized key moments such as the Death Star trench run.

Super Star Wars might not be the most authentic *Star Wars* game out there, but even more than 15 years after its release it remains one of the most enjoyable.

—CHRIS H.

DELETED SCENES

Super Star Wars did a pretty good job recapturing all the major moments of *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*. Nonetheless, here are a few more scenes we wish had been included.

TRASH COMPACTOR
It would have been cool to scurry to the top of a huge pile of junk with the water rising and the walls closing in, while blasting that annoying hairy-eyeball critter.

***MILLENNIUM FALCON* VS. TIE FIGHTER**
Millennium Falcon turret scenes were introduced in later Super NES Star Wars games, but they were missing from Super Star Wars.

WHINY LUKE
To complete Luke's persona, there should have been a minigame where Luke complains about wanting to go into Tosche Station to pick up some power converters.

MOVIE IMAGES COURTESY OF LUCASFILM LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

HAVE A FAVORITE CLASSIC GAME YOU'D LIKE TO SEE REVISITED?
Send us your requests—we'll consider them for a future installment of Playback. nintendopower@futurenet.com

NINTENDO POWER

GET THE BEST AND MOST NINTENDO COVERAGE DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR!

NEW ZELDA!
Drive a train and command enemies in The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks for Nintendo DS!
NINTENDO POWER
MARIO & SONIC TOGETHER AGAIN!
RED STEEL 2
PUNCH-OUT!! BLOCKOUT
BOOM BLOX: BASH PARTY
RESIDENT EVIL RETURNS
Wii
Check out NintendoPower.com for a sneak peek at the latest issue!
AGENTS of CHANGE
You can also subscribe, renew or give a gift at the click of a button!

SUBSCRIBE NOW - 12 ISSUES FOR ONLY $19.95

THAT'S 72% SAVINGS!

visit www.nintendopower.com/replynow

Game trademarks and copyrights are properties of their respective owners. Nintendo properties are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2009 Nintendo.

games are cool when it's hot out.

On sale NOW!

Look for it at newsstands across North America!

Nintendo DS, Wii and their respective logos are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2008 Nintendo.

REVIEWS

IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF ALL THE LATEST GAMES

Part relaxing vacation, part revolutionary standard-setter, **Wii Sports Resort** showcases the amazing potential of the Wii MotionPlus accessory.

Wii SPORTS RESORT 88

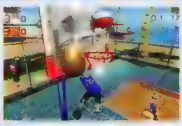
MADDEN NFL 10 89

SPACE BUST-A-MOVE 90

G.I. JOE: THE RISE OF COBRA 90

TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN (Wii)

Ant Nation 90
G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra 90
Madden NFL 10 89
Space Bust-A-Move 90
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen (DS) 90
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen (Wii) 90
Wii Sports Resort 88



Endless Summer

Wii SPORTS RESORT

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: Wii
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
ESRB: EVERYONE

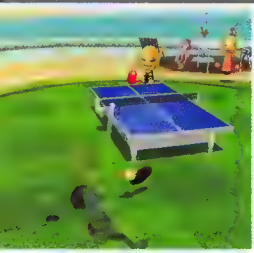
The two big questions surrounding Wii Sports Resort have been, "Is it worth full price when the first Wii Sports game came free with the Wii console" and, "Is the Wii MotionPlus accessory everything it's cracked up to be?" After spending weeks ignoring the game's advice to occasionally put down the Wii Remote controller and go outside, I'm happy to report that the answer to both questions is a resounding "yes."

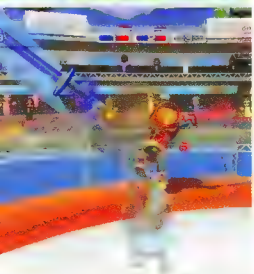
Compared to Resort, the original Wii Sports seems like nothing more than a tech demo. Sure, it redefined the way we interact with games, but in hindsight there just wasn't much of a game there. Now, before many of you correct me with the countless hours you've spent bowling and playing tennis (I certainly racked up my fair share), let me just say this: you haven't played Wii Sports Resort. One of its most startling upgrades is the sheer amount of content it packs in: 12 sports, split into 24 events, most with multiplayer options, various difficulty settings, an individually measured beginner-to-pro level-up system, and a unique set of stamps to earn. Stamps are given for achieving special goals, which range from kids' stuff (sink five three-point baskets in a row) to hardcore challenges (make all 25 shots and leave at least 15 seconds on the shot clock). Working for a stamp can also change the way you play an event. For example, a stamp in Archery requires you to ignore the usual targets and instead aim for far-off fruit that is hidden on each stage. Some of these optional challenges will keep players sweating for a long time, and along with earning a pro ranking in every event, players will find that Resort has a lot more depth than its predecessor. Still, the game doesn't have as much meat on its bones as, say, Super Mario Galaxy or Twilight Princess, which is one of the only reasons I haven't scored it in that upper echelon of modern-day masterpieces.

One area in which Resort is unmatched, however, is its Wii MotionPlus-powered controls. After experiencing the magic of true 1:1 sword swings, the extraordinary realism of throwing a Frisbee, and the giddy fun of drawing a bow, there can be no doubt that Nintendo's new peripheral is an unqualified success. Some events use the device more brilliantly than others, but none of them are like Wii Sports Boxing, in which the controls never seemed to work properly. With Wii MotionPlus, getting better at an event means improving your skill at handling the remote; it's the slight angle of your table-tennis paddle or the flick of your wrist when shooting a basketball. You're building a skill, and as a result this edition of Wii Sports is an even more physical game than the first. With this degree of control, nailing the perfect golf swing or putting just the right amount of spin on a bowling ball is incredibly satisfying.

The game includes a very broad range of events, most of which are extremely addictive or fun enough to play regularly; only a few won't garner frequent visits. Everyone's tastes will vary, but Frisbee, Archery, Table Tennis, and Island Flyover have kept this reviewer helplessly hooked, whereas Canoeing and Wakeboarding don't offer as exciting a Wii MotionPlus experience or the same degree of replayability. I still find those two sports fun enough to play from time to time, however, and all of the events in the middle of the pack have firmly wedged themselves into my regular rotation. Overall, Wii Sports Resort presents about the strongest collection of minigames one could expect to see.

Resort also is polished with the kinds of fun touches that make the best Nintendo games so endearing, from reuniting ducklings with their mother during Canoe practice to offshore whale-watching to getting a shout-out on the title screen for recent accomplishments. As before, Mii characters stored on your Wii will populate the game, and additionally Resort lets you import popular fan-made Mii characters directly from the Check Mii Out channel. And Wuhu Island, where all of the sports take place, is filled with charm. The island-themed locales and Mii clothing, plus the appearance of some island





spots across multiple events, gives the game a consistent feel that enriches the experience. You can even fly a plane over the bowling alley, over the golf course, or into the volcano to see the final target in Archery's Expert mode. Getting to know the island, exploring it, and discovering its secrets greatly add to the overall experience.

Wii Sports Resort replaces the ground-breaking Wii pack-in as the console's definitive experience. It isn't the system's very best game, but it's the title that best exemplifies the Wii era of gaming. Future titles will undoubtedly push Wii MotionPlus further with swordplay, archery, and other such activities, so in the months and years to come, Resort's pioneering controls may lose a little luster. But for today, nothing can match the joy found in simply picking up a controller and hitting the beach. **—CHRIS SL.**

WRITERS' BLOCK

IF NINTENDO WERE TO CREATE A THIRD Wii SPORTS TITLE, WHAT EVENTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

Justin Cheng

You can already do some basic swordfighting in Wii Sports Resort, but I'd like to do real fencing in the next game. En garde!

Chris Hoffman

Hang gliding. Wii Sports Resort has island Flyover to satisfy the need for aerial antics, but a motion-controlled hang gliding simulation could be a lot of fun.

Chris Shepperd

Sumo wrestling. Put your hair in a bun, strap the Wii Remote to your belly, and push your friends around the living room.

Chris Slate

I pick surfing since I'm really surprised that it wasn't in Resort. Handling the remote like a surfboard could be great!

David F. Smith

Personally, I think the next one should have a Highland Games theme. There has to be some way to make the Wii Remote simulate caber-tossing.

Steve Thomason

How about a good old-fashioned duel? Two players start with their backs to each other, and at the whistle, they spin around and draw their Wii Remotes.

Rebuilding Year

MADDEN NFL 10

RATING: **7.5**

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EA TIBURON**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

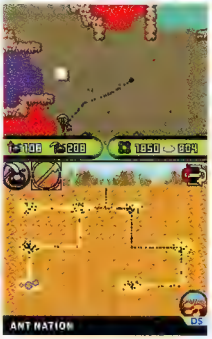
After three seasons of tinkering with the Madden formula in an attempt to appeal to the broader Wii audience, EA has decided to blow the whole thing up. Madden NFL 10 represents the most dramatic overhaul the franchise has seen in years, and while I appreciate what the folks at EA Tiburon are trying to do, hardcore football fans (such as myself) will be left feeling somewhat abandoned.

The most readily apparent change is the visual style, which exaggerates player physiques and adds stylized elements to each stadium. It certainly won't be everyone's cup of tea, but the new look is nice and clean. Universally annoying, though, is the front-end interface, which is entirely pointer-driven and features lots of big, clunky buttons. Doubtlessly designed for greater family appeal, it just makes navigating menus far more laborious than it needs to be.

Try as the game may to hide it, however, there remains a pretty deep football sim here. You still have access to a full playbook, the AI is as solid (and fully adjustable) as ever, and last year's awesome Call Your Shots feature, which allowed you to draw your own receiver routes, has now migrated to defense as well. Plus, some of the simplification is for the better. The developers have managed to streamline the gesture controls without dumbing things down, and the new pointer-based passing system works great (though you can opt to stick with last year's passing mechanics if you prefer).

I'm incredibly disappointed by the lack of a true Franchise mode, though. You can still play through an entire season, make trades, and sign free agents, but a lot of the extra bells and whistles that appealed to armchair general mangers are gone. In its place, you've got a new arcade-style tournament mode, which is admittedly pretty fun. I just don't understand why it had to be one or the other.

That EA is making a concerted effort to create something unique for Wii is admirable, but at the end of the day, I'd rather play Madden NFL 09. Hopefully this is a case of the series taking one step back before it can take two steps forward. **—STEVE T.**



TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **KROME**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Despite being based on the movie, Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen doesn't emulate the film directly, but rather takes some of its components and rearranges them into a competent but unspectacular action game. The mix of ranged and melee fighting provides mild fun, and the vehicle stages add some nice variety, but the level design is uninspired (I almost fell asleep during Bumblebee's drawn-out escape from the Decepticon base) and the AI is just plain dumb; I could often blast bad guys from a distance and they wouldn't react at all (other than to keel over). Even hard mode doesn't offer much of a challenge. On the bright side, though, the game features end-to-end 'bot-busting action without any of the flick's putrid comedy bits, so at least the game is better than the film upon which it's based. **–CHRIS H.**

SPACE BUST-A-MOVE

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **TAITO**
DEVELOPER: **LANCARSE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

There have been so many Bust-A-Move releases over the years that the series is in danger of growing stale. Fortunately, the folks at Taito seem to realize this, and have taken some strides to invigorate the series. The color-matching, bubble-busting action is as addictive as it's ever been, and Space Bust-A-Move doesn't mess with that successful formula. But the game also adds some very cool boss-level puzzles, a few new power-ups, extra modes, and special Cosmo Bubbles that you're tasked with collecting instead of popping. The difficulty has been refined, too; you can't always continue directly from where you failed, which helps keep you on your toes. There are tons of color-matching puzzle games out there, but Bust-A-Move remains a standout. If you're a puzzle fan and haven't played the series before, be sure to check it out. **–CHRIS H.**

ANT NATION

RATING: 2.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **KOU YOU SHA**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

If nothing else, this game is a faithful portrait of life as an ant. Ants are born, they gather food, maybe fight off a threat to the colony once in a while, and die. If that doesn't sound like fun, well, it's not—not in real life, and not in Ant Nation.

Think of this as Baby's First RTS. One button sends the worker ants out for food; another button sends the soldier ants out to fight. That's about as deep as it gets. Clearing simple challenges builds a bigger colony, which means a bigger and tougher army of ants to command, but there's rarely anything interesting to do with the little buggers. Just gather more food, fight some more mindless battles, and be glad you were born into a less boring species. **–DAVID S.**

TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **VICARIOUS VISIONS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

This may be the first time in video game history that a licensed DS title far exceeds the movie it's based on. Revenge of the Fallen delivers fast-paced action that frequently combines combat seamlessly with some other gameplay aspect, such as disarming bombs or disrupting satellite signals. What's more, there's a semblance of a story to follow as you play either the Autobot or Decepticon pack; there's more to grasp onto than in Michael Bay's big-budget noisefest, at least. Good voice work helps deliver the plot, as well, and likely with more spoken dialog than the movie offers. However, the balance between robot mode and vehicle mode for most of the levels seems a little off—with the exception of a few race challenges, you don't need to spend much time driving around. The game tries to encourage you to do so by placing time limits on objectives—and the result is that you start feeling rushed, as if ushers are kicking you out of the theater so the next group can enter. **–CHRIS SH.**

G.I. JOE: THE RISE OF COBRA

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **BACKBONE ENTERTAINMENT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Based on the movie of the same name, G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra for the Nintendo DS can be best described as G.I. Joe meets Gauntlet. And while that sounds great, the execution is rather lackluster. The main issue is repetitiveness. Yes, you have six Joes to choose from—each with strengths and weaknesses—and you have some notable vehicles to drive (such as the HISS tank), but the gameplay mainly boils down to walking around and shooting everything in sight. Being able to play through the story mode cooperatively would have helped offset the monotony (as it does for Gauntlet); sadly, the separate up-to-four-player modes are competitive, with you and a buddy choosing to join either Joe or Cobra and fighting against two of your friends on the other side. (You can also play two-on-one or one-on-one, but it's significantly less fun; having a full complement of four people is a must.) As a G.I. Joe fan, I wanted so badly to like The Rise of Cobra, but I guess I'll have to wait for something better to come along. **–JUSTIN C.**

ALSO THIS MONTH

Nintendo's **Metroid Prime Trilogy** packs three amazing games onto one disc with Wii enhancements.

What's that smell?

Originality

[REVIEWS ARCHIVE]

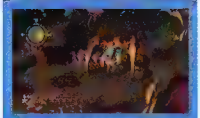
Hail to the King

We've raved about it for months. We've played it. We loved it and gave it a 9.0. You have no excuse: you *must* play Little King's Story for Wii. Of course, there were some other great games reviewed last issue, too. Nintendo DS titles Dawn of Discovery (8.5) and Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Survivor (8.0) proved to be particularly impressive.

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.

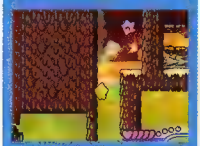
Wii				
AC/DC Live: Rock Band Track Pack	N/A	MTV Games	237	T
Animal Crossing: City Folk	8.0	Nintendo	236	E
The Bigs 2	6.0	2K Sports	244	E10+
Boogie SuperStar	7.0	Electronic Arts	235	E10+
Boom Blox Bash Party	8.0	Electronic Arts	243	E
Broken Sword: Shadow of the Templars–The Director's Cut	7.0	Ubisoft	241	T
Brothers in Arms: Double Time	7.0	Ubisoft	235	M
Call of Duty: World at War	8.0	Activision	237	M
Castlevania Judgment	7.0	Konami	236	T
Cate West: The Vanishing Files	N/A	Destineer	240	E10+
Celebrity Sports Showdown	4.5	EA Sports	235	E
The Conduit	8.0	Sega	243	T
Cooking Mama World Kitchen	6.5	Majesco	236	E
Crash: Mind over Mutant	N/A	Activision	235	E10+
Dance Dance Revolution Hottest Party 2	8.0	Konami	234	E10+
de Blob	8.0	THQ	234	E
Dead Rising: Chop Till You Drop	N/A	Capcom	240	M
Deadly Creatures	7.5	THQ	239	T
Destiny of Zorro	2.5	505	243	E10+
Dokapon Kingdom	6.5	Atlus	235	E10+
Don King Boxing	5.5	2K Sports	241	T
Excitebots: Trick Racing	8.0	Nintendo	241	E
FaceBreaker K.O. Party	5.0	Electronic Arts	235	T
FIFA Soccer 09 All-Play	7.5	Electronic Arts	235	E
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Echoes of Time	6.0	Square Enix	240	E10+
Fishing Master: World Tour	7.5	Hudson	238	E
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	7.5	Atari	243	E10+
Grand Slam Tennis	7.5	Electronic Arts	243	E
Guilty Gear XX Accent Core Plus	7.5	Aksys	241	T
Guitar Hero Metallica	N/A	Activision	240	T
Guitar Hero Smash Hits	N/A	Activision	243	T
Guitar Hero World Tour	8.5	Activision	236	T
Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince	5.5	Electronic Arts	244	E10+
Help Wanted	4.5	Hudson	242	E10+
The House of the Dead: Overkill	8.0	Sega	239	M
Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings	7.5	LucasArts	243	T
The King of Fighters: The Orochi Saga	8.0	SNK Playmore	235	T
Klonoa	9.0	Namco Bandai	241	E10+
Kung Fu Panda: Legendary Warriors	N/A	Activision	236	E10+
The Legend of Spyro: Dawn of the Dragon	N/A	Activision	236	E10+
LEGO Batman: The Videogame	7.0	Warner Bros.	235	E10+
Let's Tap	7.0	Sega	243	E
Line Rider 2: Unbound	5.0	Inxile	234	E

REVIEWER NOTES



LITTLE KING'S STORY

GUITAR HERO ON TOUR: MODERN HITS



THE LEGENDARY STAREY

Little King's Story	9.0	XSEED	244	T
Lost in Blue: Shipwrecked	6.5	Konami	235	E10+
Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa	N/A	Activision	236	E10+
MadWorld	9.0	Sega	240	M
Major League Baseball 2K9	6.0	2K Sports	240	E
Major Minor's Majestic March	6.5	Majesco	241	E
Marble Saga: Kororinpa	7.5	Hudson	240	E
Monster Lab	6.5	Eidos	236	E10+
MotoGP	4.0	Capcom	240	E
The Munchables	7.0	Namco Bandai	243	E
Mushroom Men: The Spore Wars	6.5	Gamecock	236	E10+
MySims Kingdom	7.5	Electronic Arts	235	E
MySims Party	5.0	Electronic Arts	240	E
MySims Racing	N/A	Electronic Arts	243	E
Naruto: Clash of Ninja Revolution 2	8.0	Tomy	235	T
NASCAR Kart Racing	6.5	EA Sports	238	E
NBA Live 09 All-Play	4.0	Electronic Arts	234	E
Need for Speed Undercover	6.5	Electronic Arts	236	T
Neighborhood Games	N/A	THQ	238	E
Neopets Puzzle Adventure	N/A	Capcom	236	E
New Play Control! Donkey Kong Jungle Beat	N/A	Nintendo	242	E10+
New Play Control! Mario Power Tennis	N/A	Nintendo	239	E
New Play Control! Pikmin	N/A	Nintendo	239	E
NHL 2K9	7.0	2K Sports	234	E10+
Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian: The Video Game	N/A	Majesco	242	E10+
Onechanbara: Bikini Zombie Slayers	6.5	D3Publisher	240	M
Overlord: Dark Legend	7.0	Codemasters	244	T
Phantom Brave: We Meet Again	8.0	NIS America	243	T
Pop Star Guitar	N/A	XS Games	236	T
Pro Evolution Soccer 2009	N/A	Konami	240	E
Punch-Out!!	8.5	Nintendo	242	E10+
Quantum of Solace	5.0	Activision	237	T
Rayman Raving Rabbids TV Party	5.5	Ubisoft	236	E10+
Ready 2 Rumble Revolution	5.0	Atari	240	T
Reel Fishing: Angler's Dream	N/A	Natsume	243	E
Resident Evil Archives	N/A	Capcom	244	M
Rock Band 2	9.0	MTV Games	237	T
Rock Band Track Pack Volume 2	N/A	MTV Games	237	T
Rock Revolution	4.5	Konami	235	T
Rubik's World	N/A	The Game Factory	236	E
Rune Factory Frontier	7.5	Marvelous Entertainment USA/XSEED	240	E10+
Rygar: The Battle of Argus	7.0	Tecmo	236	T
Samba de Amigo	9.0	Sega	234	E
Samurai Shodown Anthology	N/A	SNK Playmore	242	T
Shaun White Snowboarding: Road Trip	7.0	Ubisoft	236	E10+
SimAnimals	N/A	Electronic Arts	238	E
SimCity Creator	6.0	Electronic Arts	234	E
Skate It	6.0	Electronic Arts	237	E
Sonic and the Black Knight	8.0	Sega	239	E10+
Sonic Unleashed	8.0	Sega	236	E10+
Spider-Man: Web of Shadows	6.5	Activision	236	T
SPRay	3.0	Tecmo	235	E10+
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Lightsaber Duels	4.0	LucasArts	236	T
Tales of Symphonia: Dawn of the New World	8.0	Namco Bandai	236	T
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	7.0	Ubisoft	238	M
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	9.0	Electronic Arts	243	E
TNA Impact!	5.0	Midway	235	T
Tomb Raider Underworld	7.0	Eidos	236	T
Ultimate Band	6.0	Disney	235	E
Ultimate Shooting Collection	N/A	UFO	237	E
Up	6.5	THQ	242	E
Virtua Tennis 2009	7.0	Sega	244	E
Wario Land: Shake It!	8.0	Nintendo	234	E
We Cheer	6.0	Namco Bandai	235	E10+
We Ski and Snowboard	6.5	Namco Bandai	239	E
Wii Music	N/A	Nintendo	235	E
WordJong Party	N/A	Destineer	238	E
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2009	8.0	THQ	236	T
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	5.0	Activision	243	T

NINTENDO DS				
Age of Empires: Mythologies	7.0	THQ	236	E10+
Avalon Code	8.5	Marvelous Entertainment USA/XSEED	240	E10+
AWAY: Shuffle Dungeon	7.0	Majesco	235	E10+
Big Bang Mini	8.5	SouthPeak	237	E
Black Sigil: Blade of the Exiled	5.0	Graffiti	242	E
Bleach: Dark Souls	8.5	Sega	234	T
Blue Dragon Plus	8.0	Ignition	239	E
Boing! Docomodake DS	7.0	Ignition	239	E
Brain Quest Grades 3 & 4	N/A	Electronic Arts	235	E
Brain Quest Grades 5 & 6	N/A	Electronic Arts	235	E
Broken Sword: Shadow of the Templar—The Director's Cut	N/A	Ubisoft	240	T
Call of Duty: World at War	N/A	Activision	236	T
Castlevania: Order of Ecclesia	8.0	Konami	235	T
The Chase: Felix Meets Felicity	5.0	Atari	238	E
Chrono Trigger	9.0	Square Enix	236	E10+
C.O.R.E.	5.5	Graffiti	242	M
Crash: Mind over Mutant	N/A	Activision	235	E
The Dark Spire	5.0	Atlus	241	E10+
Dawn of Discovery	8.5	Ubisoft	244	E
Dokapon Journey	4.0	Atlus	241	E10+
Don King Boxing	N/A	2K Sports	240	T
Dragon Ball: Origins	7.0	Atari	235	E
Dragon Quest V: Hand of the Heavenly Bride	8.5	Square Enix	239	E
Drawn to Life: SpongeBob Squarepants Edition	7.0	THQ	234	E
Elebits: The Adventures of Kai and Zero	7.0	Konami	237	E
Emergency! Disaster Rescue Squad	N/A	Destineer	240	E10+
Exit DS	7.5	Square Enix	234	E
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Echoes of Time	6.5	Square Enix	240	E10+
Fire Emblem: Shadow Dragon	8.5	Nintendo	239	E10+
Flower, Sun, and Rain	6.0	Marvelous Entertainment USA/XSEED	240	T
Gardening Mama	8.0	Majesco	240	E
Gauntlet	7.5	Eidos	236	T
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	N/A	Atari	243	E
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	9.0	Rockstar	241	M
Guitar Hero On Tour: Decades	7.0	Activision	237	E10+
Guitar Hero On Tour: Modern Hits	7.0	Activision	244	E10+
Harvest Moon: Frantic Farming	8.0	Natsume	243	E
Henry Hatsworth in the Puzzling Adventure	8.0	Electronic Arts	240	E
Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings	N/A	LucasArts	243	T
Jake Hunter Detective Story: Memories of the Past	6.0	Aksys	242	T
Kirby Super Star Ultra	9.0	Nintendo	234	E
Knights in the Nightmare	8.0	Atlus	243	T
Kung Fu Panda: Legendary Warriors	N/A	Activision	236	E10+
Legacy of Ys: Books I & II	7.5	Atlus	238	T
The Legend of Kage 2	8.0	Square Enix	234	E10+
The Legend of Spyro: Dawn of the Dragon	N/A	Activision	236	E
The Legendary Starfy	7.0	Nintendo	243	E
LEGO Batman: The Videogame	7.5	Warner Bros.	235	E10+
LEGO Battles	5.0	Warner Bros.	243	E
Line Rider 2: Unbound	6.0	Inxile	234	E
Little Red Riding Hood's Zombie BBQ	5.0	Destineer	235	T
Lock's Quest	7.0	THQ	234	E
The Lord of the Rings: Conquest	5.0	Electronic Arts	238	E10+
Luminous Arc 2	7.0	Atlus	236	T
Lux-Pain	4.0	Ignition	240	T
Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa	N/A	Activision	236	E
Magician's Quest: Mysterious Times	7.5	Konami	242	E10+
Master of the Monster Lair	6.5	Atlus	235	E10+
Mega Man Star Force 3: Red Joker/Black Ace	6.0	Capcom	244	E
Metal Slug 7	7.5	Ignition	236	T
Miami Law	3.0	Hudson	243	T

MIAMI LAW

Miami Law doesn't [illegible] deserve the [illegible] of its [illegible] gameplay [illegible] a [illegible] terrible [illegible] and [illegible] complete [illegible] of [illegible] you'll be [illegible] the [illegible] hand. [illegible]

– [illegible]

RESIDENT EVIL ARCHIVES

It may be a remake of a remake, but the enhanced version of the original Resident Evil remains one of the all-time great Survival Horror titles. Come for the zombies, stay for Barry Burton.

– STEVE T.

GUITAR HERO SMASH HITS

In a nutshell, Smash [illegible] yes [illegible] pick [illegible] with [illegible] Star [illegible] all [illegible] good [illegible] people [illegible] (plenty [illegible] are [illegible] I [illegible] the [illegible] best [illegible] co[illegible]

Monster Lab	8.0	Eidos	236	E10+
Moon	7.5	Mastiff	236	T
Mushroom Men: Rise of the Fungi	5.0	Gamecock	236	E
My DollAll	N/A	Tomy	239	E
My World, My Way	7.0	Atlus	239	E
MySims Party	N/A	Electronic Arts	240	E
MySims Racing	N/A	Electronic Arts	243	E
Mystery Case Files: MillionHeir	6.5	Nintendo	234	E
Naruto: Path of the Ninja 2	6.5	Tomy	234	E10+
Naruto Shippuden: Ninja Council 4	5.0	Tomy	243	E10+
Neopets Puzzle Adventure	6.0	Capcom	236	E
Ninjatown	8.0	SouthPeak	235	E
Overlord Minions	7.0	Codemasters	244	E10+
Peggle Dual Shot	8.5	PopCap	240	E
Personal Trainer: Cooking	N/A	Nintendo	237	E
Personal Trainer: Math	N/A	Nintendo	239	E
Personal Trainer: Walking	N/A	Nintendo	243	E
Pokémon Platinum Version	9.0	Nintendo	241	E
Pokémon Ranger: Shadows of Almia	8.0	Nintendo	236	E
Populous	7.0	XSEED	234	T
Prey the Stars	5.5	Kooi	234	E10
Prince of Persia: The Fallen King	7.0	Ubisoft	237	E
Princess on Ice	N/A	Aksys	235	E
Puzzle Quest: Galactrix	8.0	D3Publisher	240	E10+
Quantum of Solace	6.0	Activision	237	T
Rayman Raving Rabbids TV Party	N/A	Ubisoft	236	E10+
Retro Game Challenge	8.0	XSEED	237	RP
Rhythm Heaven	9.0	Nintendo	241	E
Robocalypse	7.5	Tecmo	235	E10+
Rock Revolution	5.0	Konami	235	E10+
Rockin' Pretty	N/A	Aksys	244	E
Roogoo Attack	4.0	SouthPeak	243	E
Rubik's World	N/A	The Game Factory	236	E
Rune Factory 2: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	7.0	Natsume	237	E
Shaun the Sheep	4.0	D3Publisher	235	E
Shaun White Snowboarding	N/A	Ubisoft	236	E
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner	8.0	Atlus	244	T
SimAnimals	N/A	Electronic Arts	238	E
Skate It	5.5	Electronic Arts	237	E
Sonic Chronicles: The Dark Brotherhood	8.0	Sega	234	E
Spectrobes: Beyond the Portals	8.0	Disney	235	E10+
Spider-Man: Web of Shadows	N/A	Activision	235	E10+
Spore Creatures	8.0	Electronic Arts	234	E
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Jedi Alliance	6.0	LucasArts	236	E
Steal Princess	6.0	Atlus	241	E10+
Suikoden: Tierkreis	7.0	Konami	240	E10+
Super Robot Taisen OG Saga: Endless Frontier	7.0	Atlus	241	T
Tecmo Bowl: Kickoff	6.0	Tecmo	235	E
Theresia	N/A	Aksys	235	M
Time Hollow	7.0	Konami	234	T
Tokyo Beat Down	6.0	Atlus	240	T
Tom Clancy's EndWar	N/A	Ubisoft	236	T
Tomb Raider Underworld	N/A	Eidos	236	T
Tony Hawk's Motion	4.0	Activision	237	E
Tornado	6.0	Ignition	234	E
Touch Mechanic	5.0	Aspyr	241	E
TrackMania DS	7.0	Atlus	240	E
Transformers Animated: The Game	7.0	Activision	235	E
Treasure World	N/A	Aspyr	244	E
Unsolved Crimes	4.5	Empire	234	T
Valkyrie Profile: Covenant of the Plume	9.0	Square Enix	240	T
Viva Piñata: Pocket Paradise	7.0	THQ	234	E
What's Cooking? Jamie Oliver	N/A	Atari	235	E
World Championship Games	N/A	The Game Factory	240	E
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2009	4.0	THQ	236	T
Zenses: Oceans	N/A	The Game Factory	236	E
Zenses: Rainforest	N/A	The Game Factory	236	E
Zubo	6.5	Electronic Arts	240	E10+

INTERVIEW

Ring King

We speak to WWE superstar and die-hard gamer Kofi Kingston about Nintendo, pink hoodies, and more.

At E3 back in June, we got to do more than see a lot of great games—we also had the opportunity to speak to wrestling superstar Kofi Kingston, who was visiting the THQ booth to help promote WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010 (coming to the Nintendo DS and Wii systems this fall). One of the fastest-rising talents in World Wrestling Entertainment, Kofi had just won WWE's United States Championship belt two days prior to our interview, and he's a huge video game enthusiast as well. Kofi has been playing games since the days of the NES, and earlier this year he even defeated 15 other WWE competitors in THQ's SmackDown vs. Raw 2009 Superstar Challenge tournament. Here's what the Jamaican Sensation had to say. —CHRIS H.

NINTENDO POWER It's been a big week for you! What's the bigger deal—visiting E3 or winning the US Championship?
KOFI KINGSTON They both complement each other, because winning the belt was awesome, and ending the week with E3—it doesn't really get much better than that. [Laughs]

I'll bet! How does it feel to be a double title-holder, since you're also the reigning winner of the THQ Superstar Challenge?
That's true, I do hold that ring. I took second a couple years, and to actually be champion feels pretty good. I'm not gonna lie. It feels pretty good.

You've probably been a gamer for a long time, huh?
Yes, for as long as I can remember.

Are you a big Nintendo fan?
I just bought a Wii about two weeks ago. I was on the fence for a while, but basically what swayed me was the Punch-Out!! game. You know, I saw the commercial, with Doc sitting on the bench with the chocolate—it was just an awesome commercial. I haven't been on a jog in probably about three years, and the day that Punch-Out!! came out my girlfriend had taken the car, and I ran a mile to Best Buy and back in the rain so I could pick up the game, just so I could have it.

Did you wear a pink hoodie, though?
No, I did not wear a pink hoodie. I don't own a pink hoodie, unfortunately. I think Little Mac has the only one.

You should call Nintendo. Maybe they can hook you up.
I'll take one!

So what are some of your favorite classic Nintendo franchises?
Definitely Punch-Out!! The Mario series—it's cool to see where Mario has come [from]. You look at Super Mario Bros., and then Super Mario Bros. 2—completely different. Super Mario Bros. 3—completely different than that. Then, you know, they came out with Mario Party and Super Mario World and all that. They've done some cool things with Mario, and it's cool to actually see that they've kept Mario as the central figure, you know?

Have you played Super Mario Sunshine?
I haven't played that one yet.

It seems like it'd be right up your alley.
Yeah, I do like the sun!

What's your secret to video game success?
I think the biggest secret is just to stay consistent, because video games get better and better every year, and if you take a season off or one franchise off then you're playing catch-up, which is kind of a problem in WWE, because we're always on the road, so I don't get as much time to play as I would like to. Of course, everyone else is getting better and better, so it's harder and harder to keep up.

Have you had a chance to play much Punch-Out!! yet?
Yes, yes. I'm actually on Super Macho Man right now. Punch-Out!!'s such a cool game, to have everyone speaking their own languages, too, you know? I was just very impressed with the game.

What game character would you most liken yourself to?
I'd probably say a combination between Dee Jay from Street Fighter and Eddy Gordo from Tekken. Definitely two smooth guys, especially Eddie Gordo with his unique style, and I feel like in WWE I bring a very unique style, too. We both are very unorthodox.

And if you could be any video game character, who would it be?
Maybe Solid Snake from Metal Gear. He seems all business, and that Metal Gear franchise has gone on [a while], too. To see the evolution of him is a pretty cool thing.

If you're playing a WWE video game and you can't pick yourself, who would you pick?
I'd say the Undertaker, because he's definitely one of the staples of WWE and the whole entire franchise. He's been around for over 20 years.... I've actually been in the arena when the Undertaker comes out, and it's really just a feeling—you can't really describe it, but you get goose bumps when you're out there and everyone is just so loud and everyone just wants to be a part of what's going on when he's in the ring. So I guess the Undertaker.

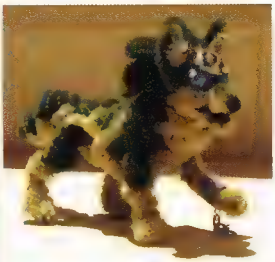
FANDOM

Warp Pipe Cleaners

One reader proves that video games and arts and crafts are a great combo.

Pipe cleaners are rarely associated with Nintendo games and characters, but we're pleased to see this creative anomaly. The sculptures you see are made out of simple household pipe cleaners, and 18-year-old creator Kat Oshman of Houston, Texas has been manipulating them into the likes of various Pokémon and other game characters since discovering her talent as a child.

"One day when I was 10, I found a package of black and white pipe cleaners," explains Oshman. "After bending and playing around with them for a little while, I eventually made a small panda. I realized then that I could actually make art out of such a material."



Each sculpture begins with a single pipe cleaner, which is bent and molded into the basic shape of the creature. From there, several other pipe cleaners are added to the skeleton to form the body, limbs, or other appendages, and while Oshman says she'll occasionally use an art marker to add detail, she prefers to keep each sculpture made entirely of pipe cleaners when possible.

Oshman creates mainly animal sculptures, but her video game-related creations include many different Pokémon—including Charizard, Pikachu, Espeon, and Pidgey—as well as wolf-form Link from The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, Amaterasu from Okami, and a moogle from Final Fantasy. She also paints, both digitally in Photoshop and with watercolor, acrylics, and oil paint, and she hopes to explore other types of artwork as she starts as a freshman at Yale University this fall. More images of Oshman's sculptures and other artwork can be found at http://kalicoart.com, where you can even commission your own original sculpture! —**ANDREW H.**

ABOVE *and* BEYOND

Got art, cosplay, case mods, etc.? Send them to us via email to **community@nintendopower.com** or via snail mail to Nintendo Power/Community c/o Future US, 4000 Shoreline Court, STE 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. We'll print the best stuff!

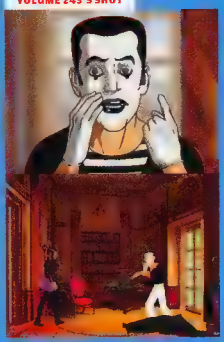
WRITE YOUR OWN CAPTION

Screen Test

THIS MONTH'S SHOT

HERE'S OUR CAPTION. THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER?

VOLUME 243'S SHOT



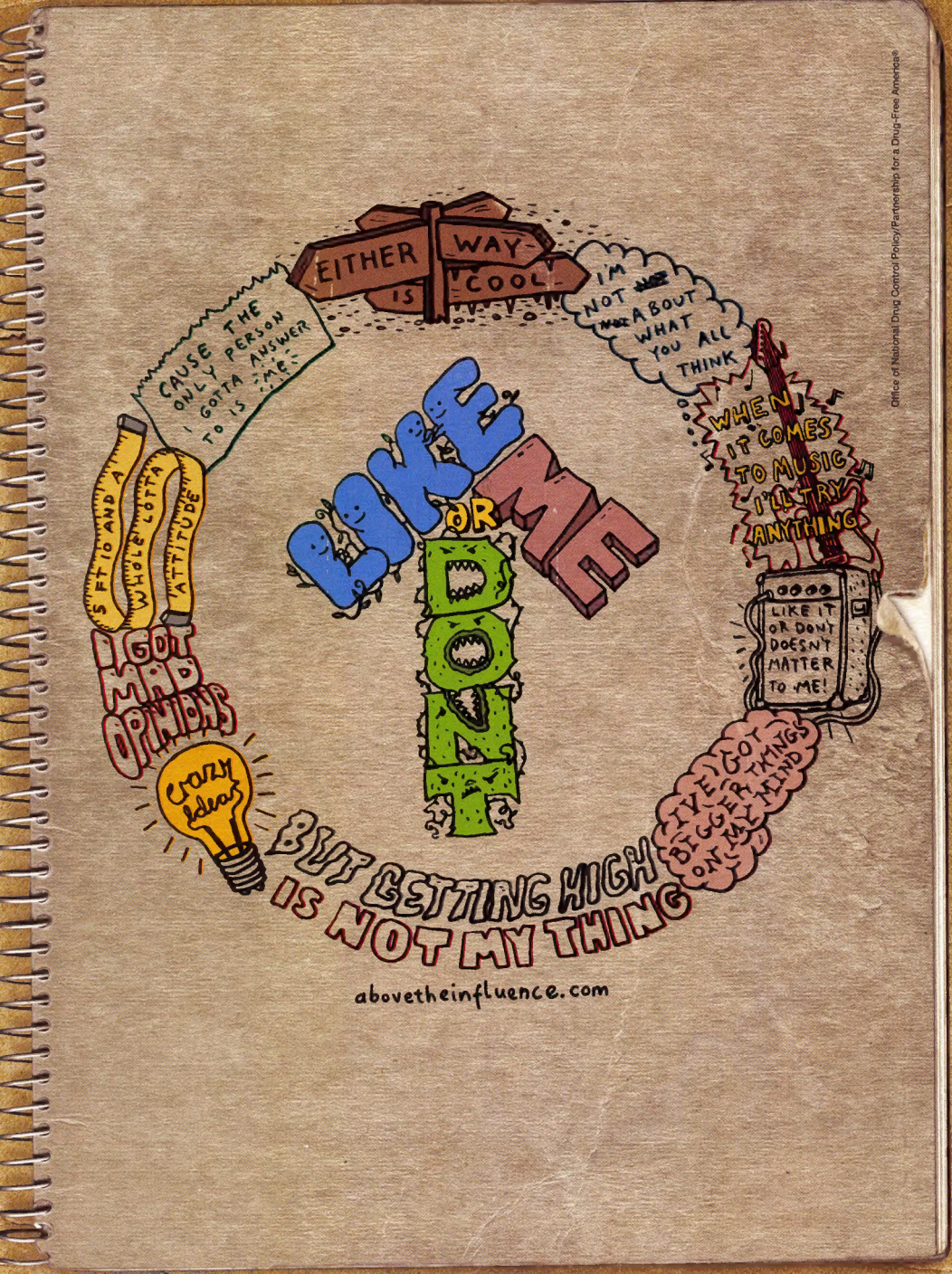
Next issue we take a deeper look at big upcoming games such as No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle. Plus, expect big reviews for Muramasa: The Demon Blade, Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box, Spyborgs, and more!

NEXT MONTH

OCTOBER 2009 • VOL. 246

NINTENDO POWER (ISSN 1041-9551) is published 13 times a year, monthly plus Holiday Issue following December issue. Future US, Inc., 4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. Phone: (650) 872-1642. Fax (650) 872-2207. Website: www.futureus.com. Application to mail at Periodicals Postage Rates is pending at South San Francisco, CA and additional mailing offices. Newsstand distribution is handled by Time Warner Retail. Subscriptions: One year basic rate (12 issues: U.S.:$24.95. Canada: $29.95. Canadian price includes postage and GST (GST #R128220688). **POSTMASTER:** Send changes of address to: Nintendo Power, PO Box 5770, Harlan, IA 51593-1270. Standard Mail enclosed in the following edition: None. Ride-Along: None. Canada Post PMA #40612608. Returns: Bleuchip International, PO Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2, Canada. Future US, Inc. also publishes Guitar World, MacLife, Maximum PC, PC Gamer, PlayStation: The Official Magazine, Pregnancy, Revolver. Windows Vista: The Official Magazine, The Official Xbox Magazine and others. Entire contents copyright 2009 Future US, Inc. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. Reproduction on the Internet of the articles and pictures in this magazine is illegal without the prior written consent of Nintendo Power. Products named in the pages of Nintendo Power are trademarks of their respective companies. Future US, Inc. is not affiliated with the companies or products advertised or covered in Nintendo Power.

CUSTOMER SERVICE: Nintendo Power Customer Care, PO Box 5770, Harlan, IA 51593-1270. Phone: 1-866-941-8368. Web: www.nintendopower.com/customerservice. Email: nintendopower@cdsfulfillment.com. Back Issues can be purchased by calling 1-800-865-7240. REPRINTS: Reprint Management Service. Phone: 717-399-1900 ext. 100.


EITHER WAY IS COOL
I'M NOT ABOUT WHAT YOU ALL THINK
'CAUSE THE ONLY PERSON I GOTTA ANSWER TO IS ME
WHEN IT COMES TO MUSIC I'LL TRY ANYTHING
LIKE IT OR DON'T DOESN'T MATTER TO ME!
5'7 TO AND A WHOLE LOTTA ATTITUDE
I GOT MIXED OPINIONS
LIKE OR DON'T
Crazy Idea
I'VE GOT BIGGER THINGS ON MY MIND
BUT GETTING HIGH IS NOT MY THING
abovetheinfluence.com

Office of National Drug Control Policy/Partnership for a Drug-Free America®

COLLECT 'EM, RAISE 'EM, AND RACE 'EM!

MONSTER RACERS™

LET'S GO!

Go around the globe in search of wild monsters to train and race. Up to 4 friends can race together. But remember, you gotta be fast because victory is only a heartbeat away!

The Race Begins August 2009!

koei.com/monsterracers

EVERYONE 10+ — Visit www.esrb.org for rating information — ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

NINTENDO DS™ — Nintendo Wi-Fi connection

Monster Racers and the KOEI logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of KOEI Co., Ltd.
©2009 KOEI Co., Ltd. All rights reserved. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo.
©2004 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.
All other trademarks are properties of their respective owners.

KOEI®

www.koei.com

RetroMags

Our goal is to preserve classic video game magazines so that they are not lost permanently.

People interested in helping out in any capacity, please visit us at www.retromags.com.

No profit is made from these scans, nor do we offer anything available from the publishers themselves.

If you come across anyone selling releases from this site, please do not support them and do let us know.

Thank you!